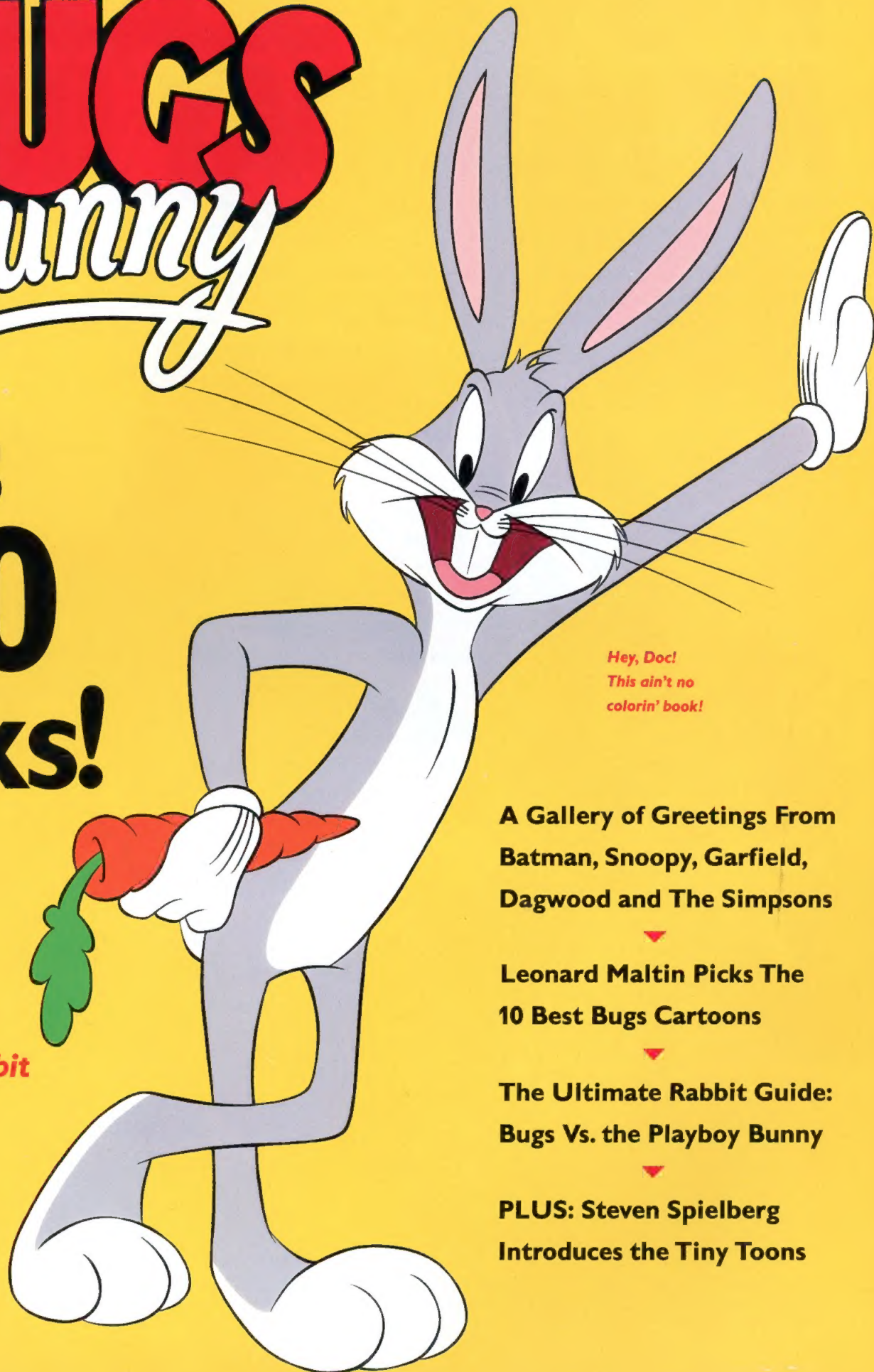


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BUGS Bunny

WHO CAN BELIEVE that it's been a half century since that wascally wabbit made his show biz debut? Yes, we're celebrating Bugs Bunny's 50th birthday, and look who we've invited to the hare's hullabaloo! As a party favor, Warner artists custom-designed a handsome piece of Bugs Bunny animation art that you can take home and hang on your wall. So grab a carrot, make a wish and let the festivities begin. Or, as Bugs himself would sing, "On wit da show!"



Happy Birthday Bugs

F E A T U R E S:

- 14 THAT'S NOT ALL, FOLKS!**
Video discounts! TV specials! Major League baseball celebrations! Amusement-park festivities! A new biography! And more. . .
- 16 BUT IS IT ART?** *By Steve Schneider*
The leading collector of Warner Bros. drawings argues why they deserve to be hung in museums.
- 17 SPECIAL ANIMATION CEL**
Suitable for framing: a collector's item from Bugs Bunny's new cartoon.
- 18 FUNNY BUNNY** *By Leonard Maltin*
Why Bugs keeps making us laugh.
PLUS: 10 Bugs Bunny cartoons you must see.
- 24 THE MAKING OF BOX OFFICE BUNNY** *By Eric Estrin*
How Warner is bringing Bugs back to movie theaters—and into the 1990s.
PLUS: Jeff Bergman gives voice to Bugs, Elmer and Daffy.
- 32 RABBIT ROAST** *By America's top cartoonists*
A 50th-birthday salute to Bugs—from Snoopy, Garfield, Dagwood, Momma, The Simpsons, Beetle Bailey, Pogo, Cathy, Batman and many more.
- 40 MASTER TOONSMITHS** *By Steve Oney and Joe Adamson*
Legendary animation directors Chuck Jones and Friz Freleng reveal how they helped make Bugs Bunny what he is today.
- 46 BUGS BUNNY'S FOUNDING FATHERS** *Chart by Jerry Beck*
Fun facts 'n' figures about the brains behind the hare.
- 48 BUGS' HOLLYWOOD AGENT** *By Greg Critser*
Dan Romanelli takes a rabbit to market.
PLUS: The man who fueled Bugs' TV stardom.
- 58 MEET THE TINY TOONS** *By Jerry Lazar*
Steven Spielberg introduces the next generation of Looney Tunes.
- 64 WHAT'S UP, DANA?**
An international guide to a fashionable pickup line.

W H A T ' S U P , D O C ?

- 4 Bugs Bunny: Quintessential American**, *by Steve O'Donnell* ▼ **One Picture Is Worth a Thousand Voices** ▼ **Chew on This**, *by Rochelle Levy* ▼ **How I Would Improve Bugs' Love Life**, *by Dr. Ruth Westheimer* ▼ **Hoppy Birthday to You!** *by Betty Crocker* ▼ **Casting Call** ▼ **Hare Roots**, *by Jerry Lazar* ▼ **An Age-old Riddle** ▼ **The Warren Report (Rabbits in Review)** ▼ **The Laws of Cartoon Motion**, *by Mark O'Donnell*

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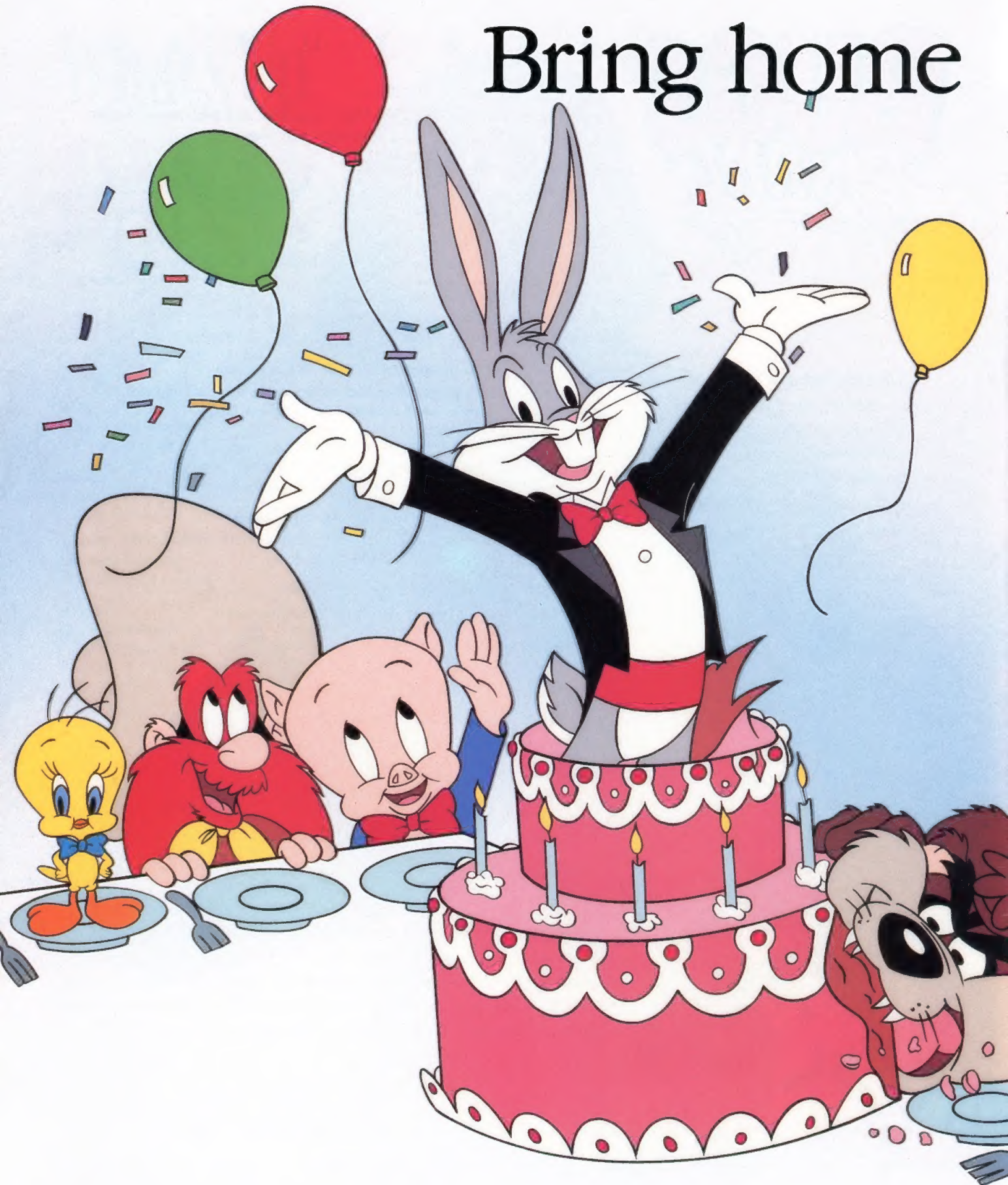
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Bring home



the party animals.



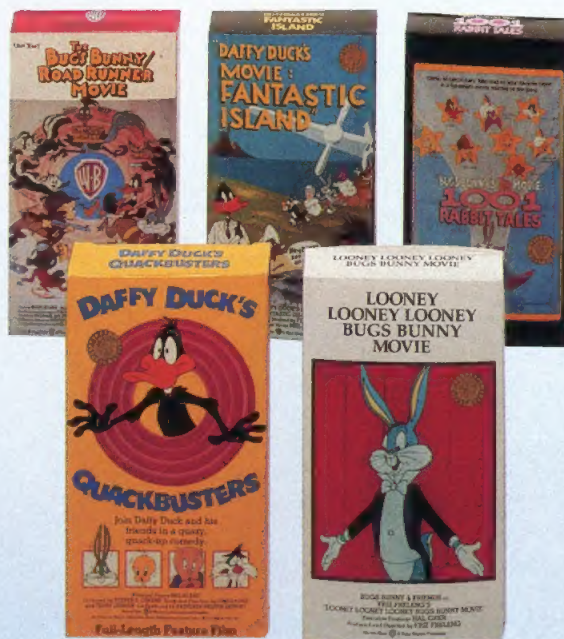
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What's Up, Doc?

DOCUMENTS AND DISPATCHES FROM THE LAND OF LOONEY TUNES

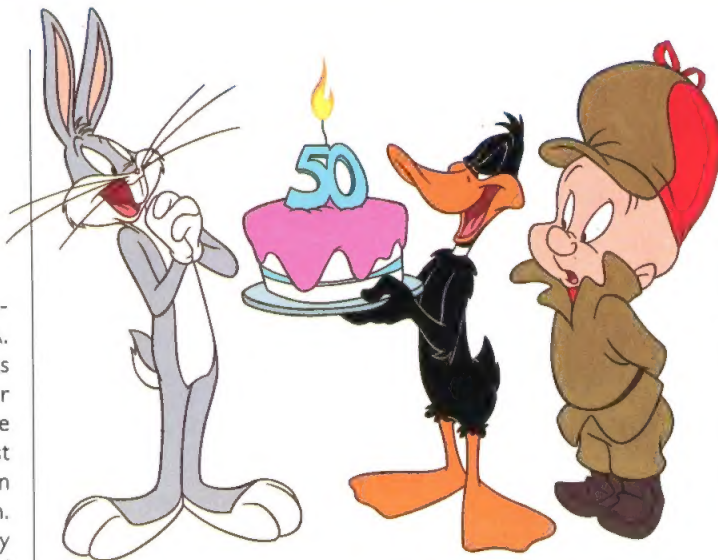
Bugs Bunny: Quintessential American...

By Steve O'Donnell

DON'T GET ME WRONG, the eagle is a fine symbol for the USA. But that stern bird of prey has stood for too many other things—Imperial Rome, the House of Hapsburg, Czarist Russia—pretty un-American operations, every one of them. Benjamin Franklin had a pretty good idea when he suggested the wild turkey as our national bird. It is a rugged and independent creature, but seems to play too easily into the hands of editorial cartoonists and the Art Buchwalds of this world.

Here's my modest proposal for our patriotic mascot: a rabbit. Not just any rabbit, as the swifter among you have already guessed, but one Bugs Bunny—the quintessential American personality in long-eared fluffy-tailed form.

Bugs seems to embody just what we are—or just what we like to think we are, and that's allowed in the symbolism biz. He's plucky, free-thinking and ingenious. A self-reliant Joe with a wisecrack, always ready to take the huffing, puffing heavies of the world down a notch or two. If the people in foreign lands have any good thoughts about the Yanks, it's probably our Bugs-like aspects they most genuinely admire. The gum-chewing GI who passed out Hershey bars at Palermo, the movie detective who makes a sardonic remark before slugging



Carrot cake? My favorite! How did ya know?

Call it a wild hunch.

Why not just call it a cawwot cake?

the schmo in the tuxedo, the rumpled reporter who doesn't care if he addresses the duke and duchess properly—these are all of the Bugs ilk.

He's the Common Man—if the Common Man were really smart and funny and also a rabbit. Even his name is down-to-earth—"Bugs"—like a Dead End Kid or a welterweight champ. His accent is enlightened-Brooklyn via the genius of Mel Blanc.

Bugs is The Little Guy—if The Little Guy had an amazing repertoire of verbal and strategic invention and were also a rabbit. He's slight of build but crafty and agile, like Sir Francis Drake's brave little fleet outmaneuvering and destroying a lumbering armada at every turn.

Like most of the lapine species, Bugs is peaceful enough, content to lollygag with his simple luxuries and homemade melodies ("Carrots are divine. You get a dozen for a dime. It's

magic!"). But threaten his modest domain, and he'll respond with brilliant energy. When riled, Bugs has been known to trounce a variety of massive scimitar-wielding Arabs, musket-toting Hessians, pretentious opera singers and befuddled rabbit hunters.

He always attempts first to communicate with transgressors ("What's up, Doc?") and then to negotiate ("Let's not go splittin' hares!"), but when all else fails, Bugs is ready to deliver a series of surgical strikes against whatever ultramaroon has done him wrong.

In a fix, Bugs is a great improviser. He's a trickster, like our Native American folk character Coyote. (Our cartoon coyotes, we should note, are handily duped by roadrunners.) Bugs can assume an impressive array of attitudes and identities to confuse and disarm his opponents. He's even prepared to disorient his foe with a lavish un-

expected smooch. Sometimes, he'll transform himself into an elevator operator or a manicurist, into Leopold Stokowski or Katharine Hepburn—all to bewilder his galootish adversaries. I don't think Bugs is gay, as some partisan groups have asserted, but he certainly is completely fearless in his pursuit of a ruse, even if it means dressing up like Carmen Miranda and cavorting around a dumbstruck Elmer Fudd.

The attitude of this special bunny recalls Fred MacMurray's classic movie riposte to some fascist thug—"Nuts to you, ya Nazi dope!" When Bugs encounters a megalomaniacal Martian in war regalia set on conquering the known universe



...And TV Star

BUGS BUNNY is TV's longest running, most popular character. For 30 years, Bugs has starred in more programs, on more channels—and has been No. 1 in the ratings more often—than any other artist in the history of television.

Currently, he is seen on: **ABC** every Saturday morning in *The Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show*; **CBS** about once monthly in prime time *Bugs and Daffy specials*; **Nickelodeon** and **Nick** at **Nite** daily in *Looney Tunes*; local stations daily in *Bugs & Friends*; and **TNT** daily in *Wild World of Shorts*.

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Happy Birthday Bugs



What's Up, Doc?



Hey, pal!

Watch where you're lickin'!

with a superdestructo laser, he sizes him up, saying, "Funny little guy, ain't he?" And who else but Bugs could persuade a gigantic hairy monster to get in a barber's chair and let Bugs reduce him to a pile of sweepings? Wouldn't we all like to be this cool? Of course we would.

You could describe Bugs as a loner (but I beat you to it). Like

cowboys or test pilots or any of our other heroes, Bugs is a man on his own. A female counterpart sometimes appears, but only momentarily. Unlike the domesticated Mickey Mouse, he's not tied down.

Another very American thing about Bugs is his love of creature comforts. He enjoys crunchy carrots, a nice hot bath—as long as it isn't in a stew pot—and even the odd rumba record. His rabbit hole is his castle, and he has successfully resisted attempts to build a skyscraper around it and a cabin on top of it. Dynamite dropped into his home has a way of reappearing in the trousers of trespassers, sending meanies like Yosemite Sam heavenward bellowing,

"Great Horny Toads!"

Nor is Bugs susceptible to the intoxication of wealth and power. Your Daffy Duck, for example, becomes a ranting lunatic if you drop him into a pile of gold and jewels. Bugs would never act that way. Once again, coolness.

Bugs is pure 20th-century-American style. He is by far the funniest animated character ever. He sure beats the hell out of Europe's insipid Smurfs and Japan's stilted robots. He's a cartoon rabbit we can be proud of. Congrats, Bugs.

Steve O'Donnell is the Emmy Award-winning head writer for NBC's Late Night with David Letterman.



Chew on This

By Rochelle Levy

"The Utah Celery Company of Salt Lake City offered to keep all [Warner] studio staffers well supplied with their product if Bugs would only switch from carrots to celery. Later, the Broccoli Institute of America strongly urged The Bunny to sample their product once in a while. But it was no go. Carrots were Bugs' trademark."

—Bugs Bunny: Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare by Joe Adamson.

- Carrots were cultivated in the Mediterranean region as early as 500 B.C.

- The feathery leaves were worn as hair and hat adornments by stylish ladies of the 17th-century English court.

- In Germany, carrots were once chopped into small pieces, roasted and ground to use as a coffee substitute.

- California is the nation's largest producer of carrots, followed by Texas.

- The carrot is a member of the parsley family. Its close cousins include caraway, coriander, anise, parsnips and celery.

- An average 2.8-ounce carrot provides more than three times the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of vitamin A, the nutrient that is associated with improving night vision. It contains vitamins B-1, B-2 and C, is high in fiber, low in sodium, rich in sugar and iron and a mere 40 calories (31, cooked).

- According to USDA statistics, Americans ate more carrots during the decade of the first Bugs shorts (the 1940s) than in the previous decade. By 1945, Americans crunched an average of 10.5 pounds per person.

- Today, American supermarkets sell \$547 million worth of carrots per year.

SPEECHLESS.



MEL BLANC
1908-1989

One Picture Is Worth a Thousand Voices

MEL BLANC supplied more than just the voice of Bugs Bunny and virtually every other Looney Tunes character; he imbued them with personality, wit and charm. His actor's sensibility enabled him to enliven the verbal battle between a lisping duck and a stuttering pig, to make

sympathetic the exploits of an amorously persistent French skunk, to bestow worldwide adulation upon a brash, Brooklynese-speaking bunny. Remarkably, Blanc could also make each member of his menagerie sing, speak in dialects and do impersonations—all while remaining

in character. His unmatched talents emanated as much from his heart as from his oversized larynx. When Warner Bros.' voice maestro passed away last year, the studio ran this simple memorial in the Hollywood trade papers. Like Mel Blanc himself, it said it all.

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How I Would Improve Bugs' Love Life

By Dr. Ruth Westheimer

We asked the outspoken sex therapist what she would do if Bugs Bunny walked into her office for a consultation. Here's her diagnosis.

FIRST OF ALL, I would giggle. And then I would say, "Boy, I'm a lucky woman! Here comes this famous cartoon character into my office. I wonder what kind of sexual-relationship problem he might have."

I would see how tall he is—I think that he is not very tall. I would smile; I like short people. I would say, "Bugs Bunny, let's have a talk. Tell me what's the matter with you. What's happening in your life? Don't you need any romantic involvement?" I know a little bit about him, and I don't remember that he's ever had a girlfriend. Why is he always designed without genitalia? I would not ask him in the first session if he has any sexual de-



sires. It might be on my mind, but I wouldn't ask.

If I were Sigmund Freud, I would say his carrot is a phallic symbol, and maybe the cartoonists had that in mind. Maybe he had to be sexless. When he came on the scene during World War II, Bugs Bunny was a symbol of America's resistance to Hitler and the Fascist powers. Here is a cartoon character that children love, hug and kiss, really want to be with—and underneath it all are some very serious issues, like resis-

tance to evil. I would say, "Maybe you never wanted to have a relationship because of your involvement with causes."

But let's say he would say, "You know, I'm really lonely. I need a partner." Then I would give him good advice: "First, go back to your creators and ask them to create a woman for you, like God created Eve out of Adam's rib. If you want little Bugs Bunnys, then she ought to be no older than mid-30s. If you want me to teach you how to have good sex, I can do that. But first you need a companion."

We all have conflicts in our lives. And we all need to express them. So, a little bit of conflict I would say is necessary because that's what life is about. For Bugs Bunny, it's always some kind of a disagreement and fight—he shows it's okay. "I'm a famous Bugs Bunny and I have problems with this duck, so it's all right for you people—not just children—it's all right for you people to have problems." But, if he would come to therapy with me for a couple of months, maybe I could help him to find that Bugs Bunny female, and he would have less fights.

Hoppy Birthday to You!

Whole-Wheat Carrot Cake

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 eggs
- 1½ cups whole-wheat flour
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 cups finely shredded carrots
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour rectangular

13-by-9-by-2-inch pan. Stir sugars, oil, vanilla and eggs in large bowl until blended, about 30 seconds; beat 1 minute. Stir in flours, baking soda, baking powder, salt, allspice and cinnamon until blended. Stir in carrots and walnuts. Pour into pan. Bake until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes. Cool 10 minutes; remove from pan. Cool completely. Add 50 candles. Serves 15.

Recipe provided by General Mills from Betty Crocker's Cake Decorating with Cake Recipes for Every Occasion.

Casting Call

Who would you cast in a hypothetical live-action Looney Tunes movie?

BRANDON TARTIKOFF

president, NBC Entertainment

Bugs Bunny	Jack Nicholson
Daffy Duck	Sean Penn
Elmer Fudd	Carroll O'Connor
Porky Pig	John Goodman
Yosemite Sam	Sam Kinison

STEVEN SPIELBERG

director

Bugs Bunny	Milton Berle
Daffy Duck	Robin Williams
Elmer Fudd	Danny DeVito
Porky Pig	John Candy
Yosemite Sam	Wilford Brimley (after seven cups of caffeinated coffee)

DAVID WOLPER

producer

Bugs Bunny	Jack Nicholson
Daffy Duck	David Letterman
Elmer Fudd	Dan Quayle
Porky Pig	Arnold Schwarzenegger
Yosemite Sam	Clint Eastwood

GENE SHALIT

film critic, NBC's Today show

Bugs Bunny	Barbra Streisand (or Lily Tomlin)
Daffy Duck	Madeline Kahn
Elmer Fudd	Carol Kane
Porky Pig	Shelley Winters
Yosemite Sam	Roseanne Barr

Hare Roots

By Jerry Lazar

IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, Bugs Bunny's family tree. At the top you will find among his ancestors an assortment of "trickster" hares that populate folklore and legend: Joel Chandler Harris's smart-alecky Brer Rabbit, the overconfident racer of



Therapy, schmerapy! Why don't she just mind her own mind!



3 cheers for Bugs Bunny on his 50th.



What's Up, Doc?

Warner Bros. animation directors strived to create in Bugs an indomitable American icon. In establishing his persona, they stole liberally from street-tough James Cagney and swashbuckler Errol Flynn, with a smattering of Dead End Kids thrown in. To make him funny and smart, they borrowed heavily from Jack Benny's comic timing and Dorothy Parker's put-down witticisms. Bugs' pranks and misadventures owe a great debt even to the slapstick routines of early silent-film stars, such as Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton.

It has been said that, in contrast to all other rabbits, Bugs Bunny has many parents but no progeny. But that is not quite true, for his spiritual descendants are indeed bountiful. Though they may not credit Bugs directly for their career successes, many of today's top comic talents possess an aura that is arguably "Bugsian."

Where do you think multi-

faceted maniacs like Robin Williams and Steve Martin get their explosive energy? Who do you suppose tutored impish impersonators like Billy Crystal and Dana Carvey? Think of smug David Letterman or cocky Chevy Chase, and who comes to mind? Fast-talking magician Penn Gillette (the garrulous half of Penn & Teller) surely learned his nastiest tricks—and copped his attitude—from Bugs. Brash Eddie Murphy, sly Michael Keaton, boyish Tom Hanks, nonchalant wiseguy Bill Murray—what director wouldn't yearn to cast any one of them as Bugs in a live-action film? Better yet, get us a young Richard Dreyfuss type. Best of all, how about mischievous Mr. Cool himself, Jack Nicholson?

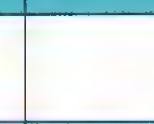
The trunk of this comic family tree, of course, is ol' Bugs—son of Groucho, father of Joker Jack, connecting Buster Keaton to Michael Keaton . . . and, like his brand of humor, destined to outlive them all.

An Age-old Riddle

What do they have in common?

Bugs Bunny
Terry Gilliam
Herbie Hancock
Valerie Harper
Tom Hayden
Tom Jones
Raul Julia
Lee Majors
Chuck Mangione
Bill Medley
Jack Nicklaus
Al Pacino
Pelé
Richard Pryor
Rex Reed
Smokey Robinson
Nancy Sinatra
Elke Sommer
Ringo Starr
Dionne Warwick
Sam Waterston
Raquel Welch
Paul Williams

THE WARREN REPORT—The Ultimate Rabbit Guide By Mark O'Donnell

	BUGS	THE PLAYBOY TRADEMARK	THE EASTER BUNNY	HARVEY	BRER RABBIT	VOLKSWAGEN RABBIT	REAL RABBIT
							
AS PEOPLE WOULD DESCRIBE	lean, single and animated	unblinking perpetual profile	reclusive superstar (unlike Santa, he does no commercial endorsements)	outgoing but invisible six-footer	grass-roots survivor	late if not great; hard-working but mechanical	diminutive pest and former rodent
AS THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS WOULD DESCRIBE	feisty American "little guy" archetype	postwar priapic icon	adapted Druidic rebirth symbol	triumph of imagination over midcentury conformism (cf <i>You Can't Take It with You</i>)	transplanted resourceful African trickster figure	extinct subspecies of bug	genus <i>Sylvilagus</i>
BAD HABITS	borderline sadism; carotene dependence	voyeurism	nocturnal trespass; glitzy ribbons	dipsomania	clay pipe; ghastly diction	weak bumpers ('83 and '84 models only)	crop despoilment
SEXUAL KINKS	dresses in women's clothes; kisses men with guns	has no body	lays eggs and gives them to children	inseparable from 50ish Elwood P. Dowd	likes being thrown in briar patch	front-wheel drive	pubescent at three months; three litters a year
MERCHANDISING ITEMS	vitamins, school supplies, plush toys, theme parks, lunch boxes, museum shows, etc.	videos, lingerie, a philosophy	chocolate figurines	high school drama-club royalties	"Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah" sheet-music sales	none (insufficient charisma)	bottom-of-the-line furs
ACTOR IN LIVE-ACTION ADAPTATION	Eddie Murphy	Warren Beatty	Michael Jackson	Willard Scott	Dennis Quaid	Michael Dukakis	Martin Short
NEMESIS	Elmer Fudd, Yosemite Sam	your mom	late cold snap; Martin Luther	The Chumley Institute; bad high school productions	Brer Fox, Brer Bear; oversensitive scholars	Toyota	everyone, including you

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Look out a new batch is on the way.



The Laws of Cartoon Motion

By Mark O'Donnell

"I KNOW this defies the law of gravity, but, you see, I never studied law!"

—Bugs Bunny, High Diving Hare (1949)

1. Any body suspended in space will remain suspended in space until made aware of its situation.

Daffy Duck steps off a cliff, expecting further pastureland. He loiters in midair, soliloquizing flippantly until he chances to

look down. At this point, the familiar principle of 32 feet per second per second takes over.

2. Any body in motion will tend to remain in motion until solid matter intervenes suddenly.

Whether shot from a cannon or in hot pursuit on foot, cartoon characters are so absolute in their momentum that only a telephone pole or an outside boulder retards their forward motion absolutely. Sir Isaac Newton called this sudden termination the stooge's surcease.

3. A body passing through solid matter will leave a perforation conforming to its perimeter.

Also called the *silhouette of passage*, this phenomenon is the specialty of victims of direct-pressure explosions and reckless cowards who are so eager to escape that they exit directly through the wall of a house,

leaving a cookie-cutout-perfect hole. The threat of skunks or matrimony often catalyzes this reaction.

4. The time required for an object to fall 20 stories is greater than or equal to the time it takes for whoever knocked it off the ledge to spiral down 20 flights to attempt to capture it unbroken.

Such an object is inevitably priceless; the attempt to capture it, inevitably unsuccessful.

5. All principles of gravity are negated by fear.

Psychic forces are sufficient in most bodies for a shock to propel them directly away from the surface. A spooky noise or an adversary's signature sound will induce motion upward, usually to the cradle of a chandelier, a treetop or the crest of a flagpole. The feet of a running character or the wheels of a speeding auto need never touch the ground, ergo fleeing turns to flight.

6. As speed increases, objects can be in several places at once.

This is particularly true in tooth-and-claw fights, in which a character's head may be glimpsed emerging from a cloud of altercation at several places simultaneously. This effect is common as well among bodies that are spinning or being throttled, and simulates our own vision's trailing retention of images. A "wacky" character has the option of self-replication only at manic high speeds and may ricochet off walls to achieve the velocity required for self-mass-liberation.

7. Certain bodies can pass through a solid wall painted to resemble tunnel entrances; others cannot.

This *trompe l'oeil* inconsistency has baffled generations, but at least it is known that whoever paints an entrance on a wall's surface to trick an oppo-

nent will be unable to pursue him into this theoretical space. The painter is flattened against the wall when he attempts to follow into the painting. This is ultimately a problem of art, not science.

8. Necessity plus Will provokes spontaneous generation.

Dangerously palpable objects—such as mallets, dynamite, pies and alluring female attire—can be manifested from what might previously have been considered "thin" air, but only when the friction of immediate jeopardy makes the object's appearance imperative. The controversial "pocket" theory suggests these objects are drawn from unseen recesses of a character's costume, or from a storehouse immediately off-screen, but this merely defers the question of how any absolutely apt object is instantaneously available.

9. Any violent rearrangement of feline matter is impermanent.

Cartoon cats possess more deaths than even the traditional nine lives afford. They can be sliced, splayed, accordion-pleated, spindled or disassembled, but they cannot be destroyed. After a few moments of blinking self-pity, they reinflate, elongate, snap back or solidify.

10. For every vengeance, there is an equal and opposite revengeance.

This is the one law of animated cartoon motion that also applies to the physical world at large. For that reason, we need the relief of watching it happen to a duck instead.

Adapted from the book, *Elementary Education*, by Mark O'Donnell. ©1980 by Mark O'Donnell. Reprinted with the permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Available in paperback from Faber and Faber.

WHITES &
SPL RED! And PINK!

TRACE OVERLAPPING
BLACKS IN



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We told you.
Remember the rules.
You didn't listen.

GREMLINS 2

THE NEW BATCH

Here they grow again.



WARNER BROS. Presents
AN AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT Production MICHAEL FINNELL "GREMLINS 2 THE NEW BATCH"
ZACH GALLIGAN PHOEBE CATES JOHN GLOVER ROBERT J. PROSKY ROBERT PICARDO CHRISTOPHER LEE
Produced by RICK BAKER Music by JERRY GOLDSMITH Executive Producers STEVEN SPIELBERG, KATHLEEN KENNEDY, FRANK MARSHALL
Written by CHARLIE HAAS Produced by MICHAEL FINNELL Directed by JOE DANTE

Bugs 50th Logo is a Trademark
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STARTS FRIDAY JUNE 22ND EVERYWHERE



That's Not All, Folks!

"My, I'll bet you rabbits lead interesting lives...The places you must go and the things you must see... My stars!"

At the Movies

BOX OFFICE BUNNY, the first new Bugs Bunny theatrical short in 26 years, will premier at movie theaters this summer.

Warner Street

BUGS BUNNY is big in Tokyo—66 feet by 39 feet, to be exact. This five-story mural of the leading Looney Tune and his merry mates adorns the Sima Creative House in the fashionable Aoyama section of the city. Last year, real estate magnate Yahuhiko Shimazaki (who is popularly known as Sima) invited Warner Bros. to decorate the buildings in his trendy neighborhood with the colorful characters that were introduced to Japan when he was a child. The project is expected to take three years. Meanwhile, the residential-and-shopping district—



Tokyo toons

with its \$4 million condos and tony boutiques—has been dubbed Warner Street.



Bugs tells all

Biography

BUGS BUNNY: Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare, by Joe Adamson, will be published this spring by Henry Holt (\$34.95).

Parties

SIX FLAGS amusement parks across the country will be celebrating Bugs' birthday all summer long with special events. The parks are located in Valencia, California; Arlington, Texas; Houston, Texas; Atlanta, Georgia; St. Louis, Missouri; Jackson, New Jersey; and Gurnee, Illinois.

TV Specials

HOLLYWOOD SALUTES Bugs' 50th Birthday, a one-hour, all-star, prime-time special, will air on CBS this spring. Plus, an all-new *Bugs & Daffy* half-hour special will premier on CBS in September.

Videos

A COMMEMORATIVE, limited-edition videocassette showcasing Bugs' 50 years in show biz will include clips from his most memorable cartoons. Warner

Home Video is also offering special discounts on 29 Bugs Bunny videocassettes. Five fully animated theatrical features will sell for \$19.98 each; 24 cartoon compilations will be priced at \$12.95 each.

Animation

BEETLEJUICE IS NOW a weekly animated Saturday-morning series on ABC. Other Warner Bros. animation projects at various stages of development: full-length features, including *The Thief and the Cobbler* (an Arabian Nights-style tale about a little cobbler who saves his city), directed by Richard Williams; *Rover Dangerfield* (written and voiced by Rodney); *Family Dog*, a prime-time CBS series inspired by an episode of Steven Spielberg's *Amazing Stories*; a syndi-



Beetlejuice on ABC

cated series based on D.C. Comics' *Batman* characters; a syndicated *Gremlins* series, based on the Joe Dante-directed films; and a Quincy Jones-produced rap video featuring a new character called The Dude.

Art Exhibit

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS! an exhibit of vintage Warner Bros. animation art (from the 1930s through the 1960s), is on a national museum tour. Schedule: Dayton, Ohio (April 29–June 10); Portsmouth, Virginia (July



A museum piece

1–August 12); Naples, Florida (September 2–October 14); Charlotte, North Carolina (November 4–December 30). Future stops include Birmingham, Alabama; Baltimore, Maryland; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Jackson, Mississippi; Wichita, Kansas.

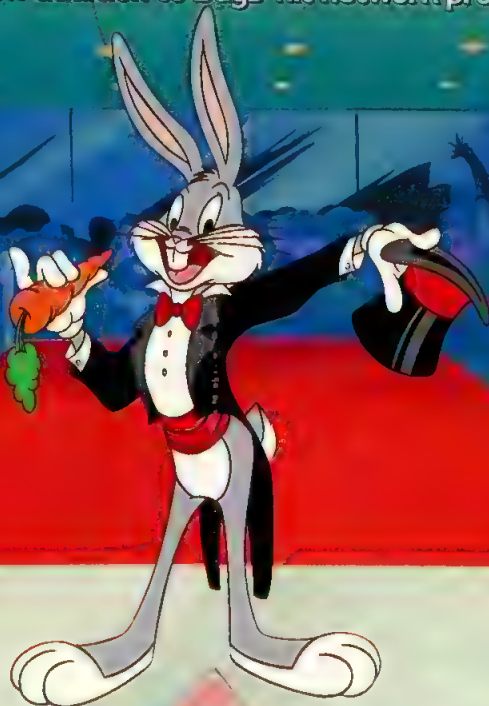
Baseball

BUGS BUNNY and other Looney Tunes characters will appear throughout the season at these Major League baseball games: Atlanta Braves (April 7); Baltimore Orioles (August 1); Boston Red Sox (September 8); Chicago White Sox (May 13); Cincinnati Reds (July 15); Cleveland Indians (April 7, 8); Detroit Tigers (July 28); Houston Astros (April 15); Los Angeles Dodgers (September 3); Milwaukee Brewers (July 5); Minnesota Twins (July 4); Montreal Expos (June 20); New York Mets (April 11); New York Yankees (July 18); Oakland Athletics (April 21); Philadelphia Phillies (May 12); Pittsburgh Pirates (June 5); San Diego Padres (June 10); San Francisco Giants (August 24); St. Louis Cardinals (July 18); Texas Rangers (August 5). ▼

COMING NEXT:

"HOLLYWOOD CELEBRATES BUGS' 50TH BIRTHDAY!"

In May, on CBS-TV, a brand-new, one-hour extravaganza celebrates Bugs' 50th Birthday — with all your favorite cartoon and "live" stars and celebrities. Join us for this new addition to Bugs' hit network programming!



LOONEY TUNES™
on Nickelodeon
Every Night at 12:00 PM
Weekends at 8:00 PM

**THE BUGS BUNNY
& TWEETY SHOW™**
on ABC-TV
Saturdays at 11:00 AM (EST)
or 10:00 AM (PST)

**BUGS BUNNY AND
DAFFY DUCK
SPECIALS**
on CBS-TV
Various Evenings
in Primetime



**SEE LOTS OF BUGS AND THE ENTIRE LOONEY TUNES GANG
ON THESE OTHER NETWORK SHOWCASES.**



**WARNER BROS.
ANIMATION**
A Time Warner Company

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BUT IS IT

art?

fOR THE CRAZY CARTOONISTS of 30 and 40 and 50 years ago, *animation art* was almost a contradiction in terms. Certainly their drawings and paintings were adroit, clever, immensely skilled. But *art*? Hardly. Art was what was purveyed by those gallery dazzlers who viewed cartoons solely as something to laugh at—and, occasionally, to draw inspiration from, usually unacknowledged.

But now the very drawings that the cartoonists at Warner Bros. used to tack up on studio walls (or toss into trash pails) are being recognized as unique works of art. Museums want them, collectors chase them, people across the country carefully frame and hang them in living rooms, invariably eliciting admiration from unknowing visitors.

I've been collecting animation art—specifically, Warner Bros. work—for more than 14 years, and it has proved to be a deeply gratifying hobby. In fact, selected pieces from my collection have recently begun to tour the United States in an exhibition called "That's all Folks! Bugs Bunny and Friends of Warner Bros. Cartoons." The tour began in February in Kansas City—the home town of many of the founders of the Warner cartoon studio—and is currently ensconced in the Dayton (Ohio) Art Institute, through June 10. Future stops include Portsmouth, Virginia; Naples, Florida; Charlotte, North Carolina; Birmingham, Alabama; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The enthusiastic acceptance of the exhibit by America's museum community is merely the latest validation of the cartoon handiwork produced at Warner Bros. as certified works of art. Yet it seems a natural evolution: For years the Warner cartoons have been heralded as the masterworks of their field; it only follows that the drawn and painted elements that constituted the finished cartoons would be similarly rich. And so they are, bristling with verve and expressivity and humor, capturing in a single image what the full flurry of motion on screen was intended to evoke.

At Warner Bros., the process of animation began with teams of animators drawing, with pencil and paper, a series of sketches that simulated movement, in the manner of old-time flip books. Then those drawings were traced onto sheets of transparent celluloid (or *cels*) and painted in.

For admirers of the art form, each level of the process brings its own rewards. The drawings are often exquisitely rendered, with a tensile snap to the lines that represents the direct expression of what the animators were striving to communicate through their characters. And the cels can be tremendously charming and fun, conveying striking color harmonies in the forms we recognize, for the cels are what are photographed to make the finished film.

For me, animation art is particularly joyful because its beauties live twice. Not only are the cels and drawings comely in and of themselves, but they also bring the supplemental thrill of seeing what you own come alive on screen. Amid the color and the clamor and the spiky music, often being viewed by unknown millions, suddenly a frozen moment of film leaps out: *There it is!* More personally, collecting animation art is a means of getting to know old friends—friends with names like Bugs and Daffy and Porky and Sam—in altogether new and more intimate ways. The artwork permits a kind of one-on-one unavailable from the onrushing on-screen activity.

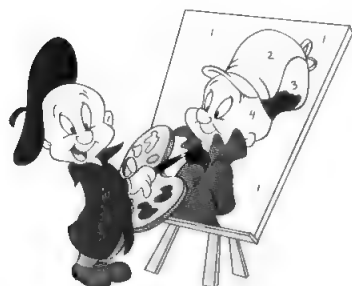
Beyond that, the original cels and sketches are, to me, pleasing for their very lack of pretension. Forget that animation art was never meant to be saved; it was also never meant to be seen. All of this work was fashioned solely to serve the finished production; if it is beautiful or pleasing, that's because the creators were genuine craftspeople, inspired to perform at the peak of their abilities not for any accolades but because this was the only way they could work. Even if their efforts were to go individually unseen, the artists were inwardly driven to express their excellence. This lends the work a touching egolessness, a sense of excellence for its own sake. In a time when the art world knows its share of ego, this selfless quality seems all the more cherishable.

But for whatever the reason, animation art is clearly speaking to increasing numbers of people. In the last few years, for example, such Warner Bros. veterans as Friz Freleng and Chuck Jones have begun to make available to collectors newly drawn limited-edition cels through a wide network of galleries and dealers. And even with prices reaching \$700 per piece and higher, the artists are having a hard time keeping up with demand. Yet again, the brilliant cartoonists of Warner Bros. are proving their drawing power—and also, this time, their drawings' power. ▼

Steve Schneider is the author of That's all Folks! The Art of Warner Bros. Animation.

This animation "cel" reproduction—and custom-designed background—evokes a scene from Bugs' new movie short, *Box Office Bunny*. Peel it off the page, scrape off the glue and clip out the background. Mount and frame, using break-resistant glass or plexiglass. Hang away from direct sunlight and heat, and it should keep until Bugs' 100th birthday!

**Cartoons on
museum walls?
Collector STEVE
SCHNEIDER
illustrates the
drawing power
of Warner
animation.**



*I may not know a
wot about art, but I
know what I like!*



FUNNY BUNNY

At 50, the ol' gray hare is still what he used to be. LEONARD MALTIN explains what keeps Bugs hopping—and picks his 10 favorite cartoons.



Bugs' and Elmer's historic first meeting in *A Wild Hare* (1940): "What's up, Doc?"





ARTWORK: STEVE SCHNEIDER COLLECTION/© WARNER BROS., INC.

WHAT'S COOKIN', DOC?

(1944, *Bob Clampett*) Although much of this cartoon's running time is taken up by a reprise of *Friz Freleng's Hiawatha's Rabbit Hunt* (1941), the framework is classic and original, as Bugs the Movie Star campaigns shamelessly and hilariously for an Oscar. When the master of ceremonies begins to extol the versatility of that year's winner of Best Actor, an immodest Bugs launches into a series of pantomimes showing off his acting range, and it's a howl. When the audience pelts him with fruit, he emerges as Carmen Miranda.

THE RABBIT OF SEVILLE

(1950, *Chuck Jones*) One of Bugs' two great encounters with opera, this one has him taking on the role of Figaro the Barber, who puts Elmer through the wringer to the lively strains of Rossini, with a set of decidedly Bugsian lyrics ("Come into my shop/Let me cut your mop/Let me shave your crop/Daintily"). The fast-paced climax (in which Bugs and Elmer get married!) is one of the great visual tours de force in the rabbit's career.

H E'S THE YOUNGEST-LOOKING 50-year-old in Hollywood. At the start of his career, he was an opening act for the likes of Bette Davis and Humphrey Bogart. Today he's a headliner.

In the fickle world of television, he's been a network star for 30 consecutive years, a record unrivaled by anyone except maybe David Brinkley . . . and *he's* not very funny.

The star of whom I speak is, of course, Bugs Bunny—he is truly a rabbit for all seasons.

If there is any doubt that he's a bona fide movie star, let's dispel that right away. Cartoons have become so much the domain of television that many people forget that Bugs and his Warner Bros. cartoon pals were actually created to be seen on the big screen. Fifty years ago, cartoons were a vital part of the moviegoing experience, along with newsreels and travelogues; they were the curtain raisers, the "extra added attractions" that made up a whole movie program, along with the feature film.

If you've never seen a cartoon in a theater, surrounded by other people, you've missed a wonderful experience. There's something about laughter that's contagious, and the Warner shorts knew how to trigger those laughs.

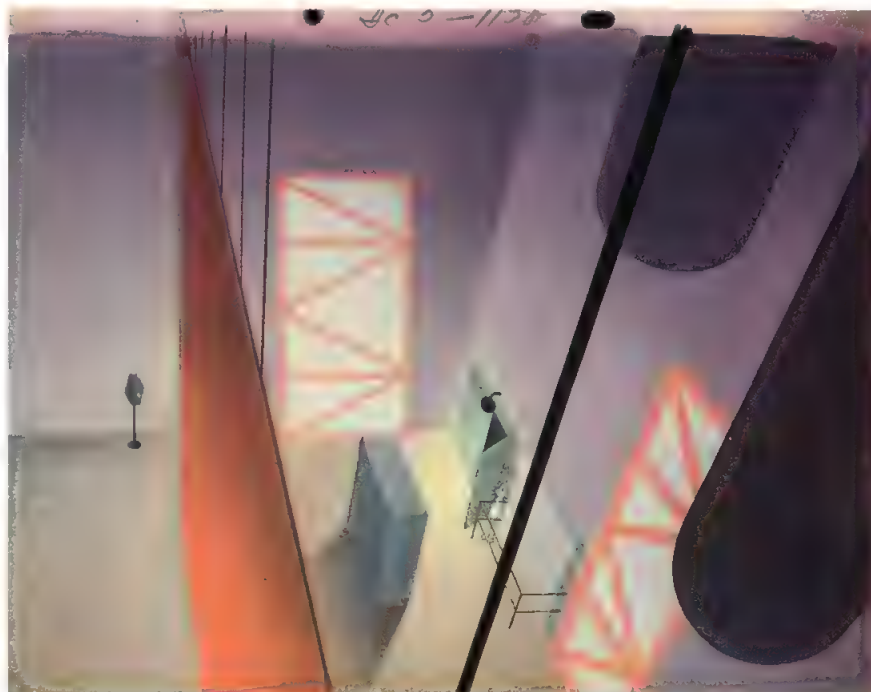
To some folks—in the movie business, and in an average audience—one cartoon was just like another. But right from the start, Bugs Bunny stood out. He earned star billing within months of his "official" debut, and before long, his name on a marquee, or in a newspaper ad, meant something to people. No one ever paid admission just to see the cartoon, but when Bugs' face appeared

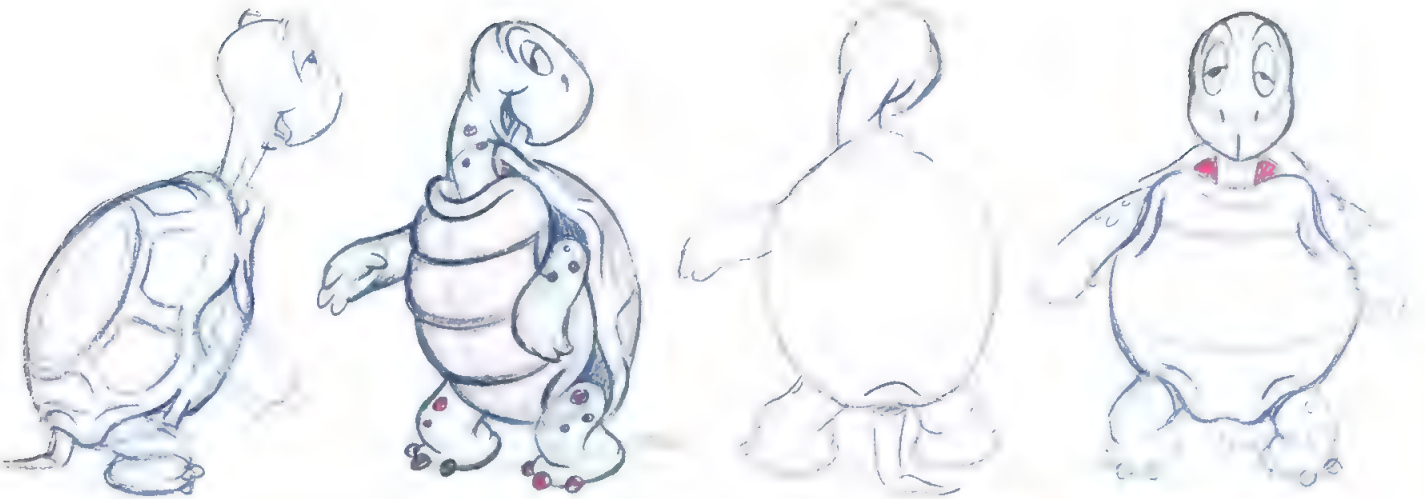
on screen, people were happy to see it . . . and theater owners knew that. Bugs continued to make the customers happy right through the mid-1960s, when theatrical shorts breathed their last.

Then, this past holiday season, Bugs appeared in a special retrospective tribute, *50 Years of Bugs Bunny in 3½ Minutes*, that preceded *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. Suddenly, Bugs was back where he belongs—on the big screen—some 2,000 theater screens, in fact, which played the combination of this 50th-birthday short and a popular comedy feature. During at least one showing, I can vouch that the audience cheered at his entrance and delighted in his every move. They enjoyed watching Bugs as much as they enjoyed the accompanying feature.

In the wake of this comes the news that Warner Bros. is concocting a Bugs Bunny short—not a compilation of past triumphs but a brand-new vehicle for "that Oscar-winning rabbit." What better way to start the decade?

Bugs is also a multimedia star. In addition to his long-running box-office reign in theaters and his three decades of television supremacy (both on Saturday mornings and in prime time—on network, cable and local stations), he's had his own syndicated comic strip since 1942, a best-selling series of comic books, a number of record albums and is today a bigger crowd pleaser in the world of merchandising than ever. His earnings from licensing alone last year ran into the millions. (I'm not just talking about coloring books, plush toys and sweatshirts, either; collectors now pay hundreds of dollars





for animation celluloids featuring Bugs. His poses hang in prestigious art galleries alongside the work of prominent modern artists!)

He's been a commercial spokesrabbit for a variety of products over the years, and plays host at Six Flags amusement parks nationally.

There's been a considerable amount of hoopla surrounding Bugs' 50th birthday, but there's also been a certain amount of disbelief. It makes some people uncomfortable to realize that he's been around for half a century. The reason is simple: Bugs is so completely contemporary.

Bugs is still a star because he is so fresh—in both senses of the word. If irreverence is his middle name, it's also his passport into the '90s and beyond. (If you were to remake

Beverly Hills Cop as a cartoon feature, Bugs would be a perfect substitute for Eddie Murphy: brash, quick on his feet, always in command of a situation.) Styles change, and tastes change, but the comedians who buck the establishment are the ones who last the longest, and that goes for animated characters as well as live-action ones.

Human nature is pretty consistent. That's why a comedy that Charlie Chaplin made in 1916 is still funny today, and essays that Mark Twain penned 100 years ago can still provoke a chuckle of recognition. Bugs Bunny tweaked the nose of his predators from the day he first stepped on-screen; it appealed to audiences then, and it certainly retains its allure today.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Bugs, however, is the very fact that we can talk about "him" as if he were real. We can trace his life story, examine his evolution, cite his many achievements and analyze his personality. He has a "studio bio" like any movie star, and a filmography too. His directors give interviews about him, and his fans range from schoolchildren to serious film scholars.

All this for a character who is in reality a combination of pencil drawings, ink and paint and a disembodied voice. Bugs Bunny is one of the most persuasive illusions of the 20th century. I know I think of him as real, and millions of others regard him the same way. If you talk to his creators, you learn that they regarded Bugs—and all their characters—as living, breathing beings. Clearly, that's why they have such life for all of us.

So, let's look at Bugs' biography, and see how a great star was born. It did not happen overnight; it took two to three years for his creators to realize what they had in him. What's more, he was not the instantaneous brainchild of one person. As veteran Looney Tunes director Chuck Jones has noted, most rabbits have many offspring, but this one had many fathers.

He also had an unusually long gestation

TORTOISE WINS BY A HARE

(1943, *Bob Clampett*) Bugs is so infuriated by the memory of losing a race to the tortoise (in *Tex Avery's Tortoise Beats Hare*) that he decides to challenge him again, after designing a turtlelike shell in which to run. This is the most manic of all Bugs' cartoons, and the energy level is positively breathtaking; Mel Blanc's performance certainly ranks among his best, especially as Bugs nears the finish line ("I'm gonna win! I'm gonna win!").



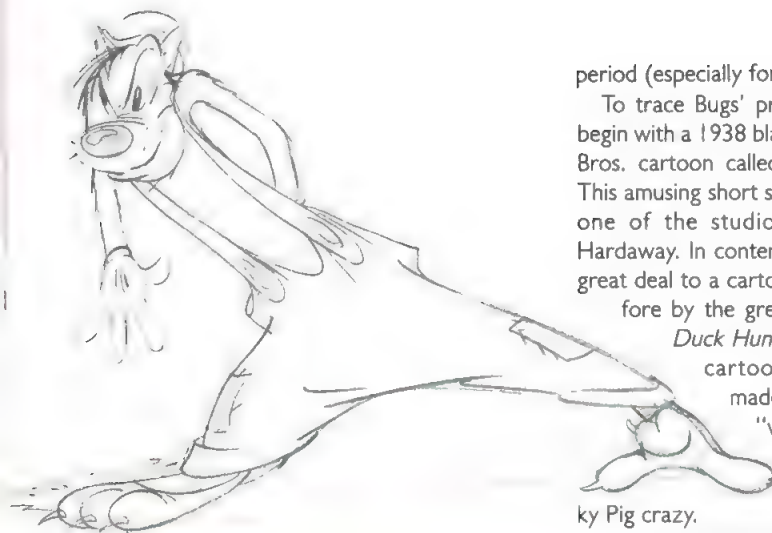
SLICK HARE

(1947, *Friz Freleng*) Bugs in Hollywood again, this time hobnobbing with real-life movie stars at an elegant nightclub/restaurant. Waiter Elmer Fudd finds him hiding in the kitchen stealing carrots, just in time to fill Humphrey Bogart's order of fried rabbit. My favorite moment: when Bugs imitates Carmen Miranda's Brazilian dance.

LIFE BEGINS AT 50

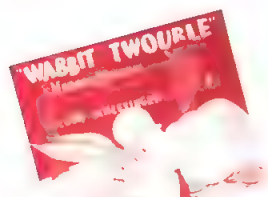
IF BUGS BUNNY needs any cheering up as he approaches the half-century mark, he can take solace in the fact that most rabbits his age have already been dead for 45 years. If our heroic hare requires additional fortitude to ward off the mid-career blues, he need look no further than Desmond Morris's *Book of Ages* for examples of humans who accomplished major historic achievements at the tender age of 50:

- Roman Emperor Claudius I ascended to power (A.D. 41);
- James Boswell published his classic biography of Samuel Johnson (1791);
- Charles Darwin published his landmark *The Origin of Species* (1859);
- Henry Ford introduced the "assembly line" concept to automobile manufacturing (1913);
- Henry Kissinger was appointed Secretary of State and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1973).



LITTLE RED RIDING RABBIT

(1944, *Friz Freleng*) Bugs encounters a particularly loudmouthed Red (voiced by Bea Benaderet) while trying his best to outfox the Wolf who's hiding in Grandma's house. Bright, brash, fast-paced and full of great music, this is quintessential Bugs.



WABBIT TWOUBLE

(1941, *Bob Clampett*) Bugs makes mincemeat of a fattened Elmer Fudd's camping trip to Jellostone National Park ("a westful weetweat"). He talks to the camera, plays punching bag with Elmer's nose and, in the funniest single moment, inflates himself into a replica of Elmer's pear-shaped body, just to deliver a mocking rendition of his adversary's last line of dialogue.

THE OLD GREY HARE

(1944, *Bob Clampett*) Elmer Fudd is granted the ability to see into the future, to find out if he'll ever catch The Wabbit—and when he (apparently) does, Bugs reminisces about the first time they met each other, as babies. A wild and funny time-travel fantasy; Bugs and Elmer are wonderful as old codgers, and Bugs' death scene (as he's really getting ready to trap Elmer inside his freshly dug gravel) is priceless.

period (especially for a rabbit!).

To trace Bugs' prehistory, you have to begin with a 1938 black-and-white Warner Bros. cartoon called *Porky's Hare Hunt*. This amusing short subject was directed by one of the studio's gag writers, Ben Hardaway. In content and style, it owed a great deal to a cartoon made the year before by the great Tex Avery, *Porky's Duck Hunt*. It was in that wacky cartoon that Daffy Duck made his first appearance, "woo-wooing" into history after nearly driving hunter Porky Pig crazy.

Porky's Hare Hunt rehashes much of the material in the earlier *Duck Hunt*. Indeed, the bunny rabbit who taunts Porky (in the role that would later be assumed by Elmer Fudd, with hunting cap and rifle) has more in common with Daffy than with the Bugs who later emerged.

Still, the rabbit we see in this black-and-white cartoon shares many traits with the later Bugs. He teases his adversary with wisecracks ("Here I am, fat boy!"), he makes disarming self-references ("Don't let me worry you, chief—I'm just a trifle pixilated"), and when Porky does finally get the drop on him, he turns melodramatic, in best Bugs Bunny fashion ("Don't shoot!" he pleads).

So there are hints of the star-to-be in his initial screen appearance . . . but the most important thing about the cartoon didn't appear on-screen. Director Ben Hardaway's nickname was Bugs. So around the studio, at least, this brash new character was thought of as Bugs' bunny. That informal name wasn't actually used in the credits for three more years, however.

One year later, Hardaway codirected (with Cal Dalton) a second cartoon called *Hare-um Scare-um*, in color, which fea-

tured the same basic character, redesigned to feature prominent buck teeth. He faced a new adversary, again a hunter, and displayed the same aggressive personality traits.

There was just one problem: He wasn't terribly funny.

Director Chuck Jones provided part of the solution when he made *Elmer's Candid Camera* the following year: He gave Bugs a funny foil named Elmer Fudd.

But it took Tex Avery to really come up with the answers his colleagues had been searching for. In 1940's *A Wild Hare*—the first true Bugs Bunny short—Avery not only nailed down Elmer Fudd (who opens the cartoon in now-classic form by telling the audience, "Be vewwy quiet, I'm hunting wabbits"), he zeroed in on Bugs' personality. Bugs could be mischievous without being obnoxious; he could do terrible things to Elmer, but not without being provoked. And in *A Wild Hare*, he was not only funny, he became more defined as a personality, with his utterance of the immortal words, "What's up, Doc?"

Avery later explained that in his native Texas, it was cool for high school kids to call each other "Doc," and this was in his head when trying to think of a way Bugs could express a certain sauciness—and lack of fear. After all, Elmer is packing a shotgun, but Bugs seems unperturbed.

A Wild Hare was a wild success, and cartoon studio boss Leon Schlesinger ordered his troops to come up with more Bugs Bunny cartoons right away. From that point on, everyone in the studio got a chance to work with Bugs, and it's fascinating to see how different writers and directors approached the character.

Wait a minute! We are still talking about a cartoon character, aren't we? What's all this with writers and directors, performances and points of view? (I once gave a lecture at New York University about the evolution of Bugs Bunny and was touting the upcoming program in a film class, explaining that I'd be showing examples of his early period, late period and so on. A smug and disbelieving film student asked, "Are you going to talk about his Blue Period too?")

All right, I'll admit it sounds strange. But the fact is, Bugs was such a tangible character that the men who wrote and directed his cartoons did deal with him as they would a great actor, capable of shading and nuance.

Chuck Jones liked having Bugs stand very erect, in a pose of absolute calm; he always thought of the rabbit as Groucho Marx, and felt that Bugs' anthem was, in response to provocation, "Of course you realize, this means war!"



Friz Freleng felt that Elmer Fudd was too stupid to challenge a brainy fellow like Bugs, so he developed the character of Yosemite Sam to give the rabbit a different kind of adversary.

Bob Clampett saw Bugs as a wild and crazy guy, and he played up the rabbit's irreverence in his 1940s cartoons. My own favorite is the one called *Wabbit Twouble* (which has its title spelled out in Elmer Fudd-ese: The director's name is Wobert Cwampett), in which Bugs addresses the audience directly. As he torments a fattened Elmer Fudd, Bugs turns to the camera in close-up and says, "I do dis kind of stuff to him all through the picture!" Later, while pretending to be a grizzly bear, he pauses for a split second in the rapid-paced action to declare, "Funny situation, ain't it?" Who couldn't love a character like this?

THERE'S ANOTHER ASPECT of Bugs Bunny that's rarely discussed: Sometimes he really isn't very nice. As Bugs is the first to admit, "Ain't I a stinker?" But whether his target is an abrasively loudmouthed Red Riding Hood, a pompous concert tenor, a bullying prizefighter, a dumb hunting dog or just plain old Elmer Fudd, Bugs' opponents have one thing in common: They're all just asking for it.

Bugs delivers just desserts (often literally, in the form of well-aimed pies), and that's a key reason we're always rooting for him. He does what we'd all love to do—if we could only get away with it.

He will not be bullied, he will not be bested . . . and he relies on his wits, not his strength, to get him out of a tight spot. Who wouldn't want someone like Bugs running



interference for him in real life?

(In *Rabbit Punch*, when it looks like Bugs has finally met his match in an overgrown prizefighter who's got him tied to a railroad track, the screen suddenly goes white. After a moment of silence, Bugs appears to explain that "Due to coicomstances beyond our control," the picture has come to an end. And then he reveals the scissors with which he cut the film short. If he can't solve a problem one way, he'll find another.)

Bugs has always made me laugh, but he's done something more: He's burrowed into my consciousness. Like those other masters of vicarious humor, the Marx Brothers, Bugs is a tonic for anyone who's suffered a few slings and arrows in life. I have only to think of him in certain situations, and I smile. His voice (that is to say, Mel Blanc's voice) rings in my head, singing some of those obscure songs he loved to warble, or inquiring, "How long ya in for, Doc?"

And when I see my three-and-a-half-year-old daughter watching the same cartoons I enjoyed in my childhood, and laughing just as I did then (and continue to do today), I feel a special kind of joy. It doesn't matter that he's 50, because he's going to live forever. ▼

Leonard Maltin is the film correspondent for *Entertainment Tonight* and the author of *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons*.

BUGS BUNNY RIDES AGAIN

(1948, *Friz Freleng*) This is my favorite showdown between Bugs and Yosemite Sam, set in a classic Western town with all the trimmings. Bugs' imitation of a laid-back gunfighter who rolls his own cigarettes is perfect, but the greatest moment comes when Sam fires his pistols and orders Bugs to dance—sending Bugs into a classic time-step. When Bugs finishes a chorus, he calls out, "Take it, Sam!" and without missing a beat, the fiery cowboy goes into a perfect buck-and-wing.

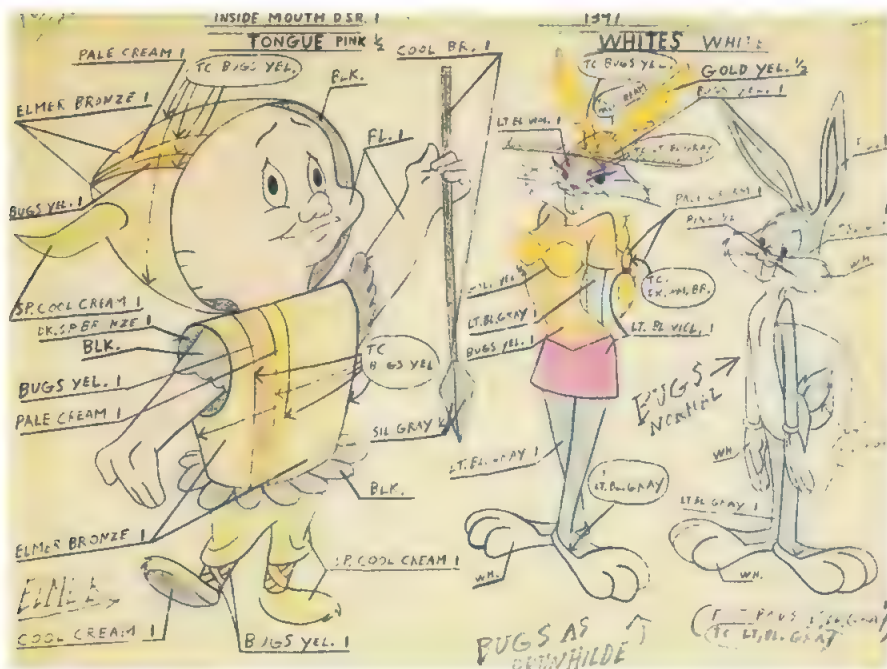


RABBIT SEASONING

(1952, *Chuck Jones*) Bugs' continuing battle with Elmer becomes a three-sided affair when Daffy Duck turns up, posting signs leading the hunter to Bugs' rabbit hole—trying to divert Elmer's attention from the fact that it's really duck season. Daffy should know better than to mess with Bugs, however. This was his debut as fall guy to the canny rabbit, and it's with good reason that Daffy concludes, "You're dethpicable!" Michael Maltese's dialogue ("Pronoun trouble") deserves special mention.

WHAT'S OPERA, DOC?

(1957, *Chuck Jones*) The most awesome and spectacular of all Bugs Bunny cartoons, this compression of Wagner's *Ring* cycle of operas is a knockout from start to finish. Elmer's chant of "Kill the wabbit!" is matched in memory only by Bugs' pirouette with him during a balletic interlude. The settings and the music are spectacular, and it's certainly Elmer's finest moment on screen. What a great cartoon!



the
making of

BOX OFFICE BUNNY

*A new generation of animators
brings Bugs into the '90s
with all his wit and humor
intact. A behind-the-scenes
report by ERIC ESTRIN.*



IF FRIENDS HEARD only a soft thud when Bob Scott hit the slope in a skiing accident New Year's weekend. But to Scott, the pop in his thumb was an explosion the magnitude of one of those Road Runner-inspired mishaps at the Acme Dynamite Company. What a time to happen! The young artist was just set to begin work on a dream assignment: Bugs Bunny's 50th-birthday short. A broken thumb could put the skids to his most exciting job yet, and create a potential setback in the production of *Box Office Bunny*.

Though Bugs has been a major television presence for three decades, *Box Office Bunny* is his first theatrical short in 26 years. And so Kathleen Helpie, the producer of the Looney Tunes featurette, was stunned when Scott showed up at work with a cast halfway up his arm. She helped him bind a pencil to his hand with yards of gauze from a first-aid kit. Scott tried to draw but lacked dexterity. Darrell Van Citters, the film's director, ribbed Scott good-naturedly about his "robo-arm" mechanics, then unhappily began a phone search for another animator to come on board.

But a few days later, Scott's doctor fit him with a splint that, despite his slight fracture, allowed him to ply his skill at full speed. Like Wile E. Coyote himself, the artist had risen from apparent defeat to begin chasing his dream anew.

**Animation
director Darrell
Van Citters:** "We
want to bring a
little of ourselves
into this."



PHOTOS: ALAN LEVENSEN





Production designer Michael Giaimo captured the rich visual details of L.A. movie houses.

Not since 1940's *A Wild Hare*, when Elmer Fudd's nemesis first burst from his hutch a full-blown character, has a short cartoon generated so much interest as this—and had so many hurdles to jump. From its inception, *Box Office Bunny*, which features Bugs, Elmer and Daffy Duck in a war of wills at the local neighborhood theater complex, presented a daunting challenge: showcase the cartoon world's best-loved character with all his wit, sass and visual appeal intact, and bring him into a modern setting without compromising the elements that made him a star in the 1940s and '50s.

To make things tougher, the architects of this campaign—the writer, director, producer and

artists—were all relative newcomers to short features, a genre that had fallen out of favor with theater owners in the mid-1960s. Even legendary talent Mel Blanc, who, before passing away last year, gave voice to nearly every word of principal dialogue ever uttered in a Looney Tunes or Merrie Melodies cartoon, would have to be recast. All that really remained of Bugs' past was his spirit, which can be readily glimpsed on television whenever he bursts through the multihued bull's-eye over that familiar background theme. But could a new generation of animators put that spirit on celluloid?

"We're trying to move the characters forward while building on the past," says Van Citters, as

he sketches one of hundreds of key drawings his animators will use as their guideposts. "We have high regard for what came before, but obviously we want to bring a little of ourselves into this too."

Van Citters, the old man of the project at 33, is an amiable, unassuming fellow whose sly, toothy grin calls to mind the carrot-chomping character he's currently rendering with incredible precision and speed. He oversees a team of four in-house animators, two background artists and a production designer who, when they're not joking among themselves, often sit quietly amid their sketches, hooked by headphones into a wide range of music—drawing, drawing, drawing.

Their fourth-floor Burbank office suite is decorated with carpet the shade of rabbit fur and vibrant, colorful murals of the Looney Tunes clan: Yosemite Sam looking for a showdown, Wile E. Coyote chasing the Road Runner, Bugs lounging in Daffy's chair. The wackiest it ever gets around here is when staff artist Shawn Keller dresses up in one of the full body costumes he makes as a hobby and traipses around the office impersonating a Warner cartoon character. Not normal office behavior, perhaps, but still a far cry from Termite Terrace, the rickety Warner studio that spawned the likes of Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, Friz Freleng, Chuck Jones and a gang of self-described social misfits who waged war daily with an upper management confounded by their genius.

Here, management exists mainly in the person of Kathleen Helppie, the animation vice president who would like nothing better than to have her department produce several of these shorts each year. Helppie, 33, herself an occasional voice artist and former film extra—you can catch her giving John Belushi a dirty look in the *Animal House* cafeteria line—came to Warner Bros. to learn more about animation voicing. She hooked up with Friz Freleng as an executive secretary and quickly worked her way up the administrative and production ranks.

When studio brass started gearing up for Bugs' 50th-birthday year, Helppie asked Van Citters to propose an idea she could sell to her bosses. He turned to Charles Carney, 39, a high school English teacher and graduate student who had impressed him with his knowledge of (and love for) cartoons when they'd met by chance the previous year. Van Citters phoned Carney and asked for ideas for a three-minute Bugs short, and Carney spouted several off the top of his head, using the full range of Bugs' Looney Tunes adversaries. As soon as they hung up, Carney began writing story synopses—eight in all—which he faxed to Van Citters from a copy shop in the Venice, California, neighborhood where he lives.

Over the next few days, Carney repeatedly made the 45-minute commute to Burbank, where he huddled with Van Citters to create a script. "Darrell had to tell me how to write in script format, because I had no idea," he recalls. "I'd run into his office and ask, 'What do you call it when



Box Office Bunny producer Kathleen Helppie first came to Warner to learn animation voicing.

the camera goes like this?" " he says, gesturing telescopically with his hands. "He'd say, 'Iris out,' and I'd run back to the other room and write some more. Jump cut, wipe, fade—I didn't know any of those terms."

They eventually focused on a movie-theater setting, with Bugs and Elmer popping into contemporary Warner Bros. films. It was fun, hip and, like the cartoons of the '40s that helped sell sheet music by popularizing Warner-owned songs, it hyped studio product. But Warner executives nixed the idea; they felt that it was too self-promotional. It was decided to focus on the moviegoing experience without conjuring up any recognizable live-action stars.

This was a heady time for Carney, who's earning a master's degree in British Renaissance Literature but has been fascinated by animation since growing up in Anaheim, a cannon shot from Disneyland. "My most exciting day, I acted out all the parts for Darrell, Bob and [key animator] Chris Buck in Darrell's office. Then I'd go next door to write. Chris would come in and say, 'Are you done with that page yet?' I'd rip it out of the typewriter, and an hour later he'd have eight panels done for the storyboard."

The final script phase took longer than expected, partly because of discussions regarding whether or not to include Daffy Duck in the story, and partly because the creative team was struggling to keep the action to the prescribed three minutes' length.

That condition was addressed in a meeting the

Helppie hired three kids to create and perform 'The Sticky Floor Rap,' so that a freelance cinematographer could capture it on film.



Alan Bodner painted the backgrounds against which Bugs, Daffy and Elmer cavort.



No bunny's gonna make a monkey outta this duck!

top brass had with Tim Burton, the talented animator who crossed over to live-action by directing such Warner Bros. megahits as *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*, *Beetlejuice* and *Batman*. Burton, an old schoolmate of Van Citters at California Institute of the Arts, liked the storyboards and suggested the cartoon be expanded. Warner executives were wary of displeasing theater owners, who might prefer using time between programs to sell popcorn, but they nevertheless agreed to grant Helppie an additional minute to tell Carney's story.

Van Citters' team finished creating the shot-by-shot storyboards—delineating the characters' key expressions and poses—to guide the anima-

tors. Then they began what was probably the most difficult phase of the entire production process: casting for Bugs' new voice. Clearly, no one could ever replicate the singular talents of Mel Blanc. Indeed, in future Bugs cartoons, Warner plans to use a variety of voice artists. The *Box Office Bunny* role was coveted by impressionists around the world, but the field was quickly narrowed down to two candidates: Mel Blanc's son, Noel, who inherited his father's versatile voice box; and Jeffrey Bergman, a voice-over artist from Pennsylvania.

Bergman auditioned on the Friday before Christmas in a Burbank sound studio near Warner's animation offices. Though he had

flown in late the night before from the East Coast and had only a few hours to look at the script, he appeared relaxed and sharp when he and Van Citters reviewed the storyboards.

Bergman (who says he sometimes drinks a quart of milk followed by a pint of olive oil before doing a demanding voice like Yosemite Sam's) performed the entire script in a four-hour session—first Bugs' lines, then Elmer's and finally Daffy's. He gave as many as 15 or 20 takes before perfecting a line reading. Though he was initially asked to deliver the material fast enough to squeeze under the four-minute cap, Helpie and Van Citters, who watched from the booth with an audio engineer, began to feel the cadence was unnatural and asked him to slow it down. "I'll get more time from the studio if I have to," said Helpie.

The next week, the producer and director were back in the studio with Noel Blanc, who arrived listening to tapes of his father over a headset, and warmed up by singing a song about carrots from an old cartoon. His performance of Bugs' lines was urgent, almost hyper, and like Bergman, he gave excellent readings.

That week, postproduction supervisor Jim Champin edited together two dialogue tracks—one of Bergman's best takes, and one of Blanc's. Van Citters was leaning toward the lower-pitched Bergman version but wasn't sure. Helpie took copies of the tapes home over the New Year's weekend and called the office from her car phone on the way to work on Tuesday. Van Citters was already there at 7 a.m. They agreed: Though they were eager to use Blanc in the future, for this production, Bergman got the nod.

ARTISTS COULD NOW BEGIN to synchronize character movements with dialogue—a process requiring a palace guard's patience and a safe-cracker's touch. There are no exotic locations to photograph during this phase, no big stars to hang out with, no thrilling action to film. Instead, there are drawings to do—thousands of them for a four-minute short, each only marginally different from the next.

Take Scene 38, for instance, in which the following words are spoken: "Yeah, Einstein, if I'm no rabbit, then. . . ." An angry Daffy delivers the line into Elmer's face, then realizes he's been tricked by Bugs, who stands there watching. Daffy catches himself, stops and turns. That's it—three characters, seven words, no special effects. But that scene will require about 80 frames of film, maybe 50 to 70 separate drawings (some of them are repeated), each calibrated to a 24th of a second so the dialogue matches Daffy's mouth movements. Bob Scott, the animator responsible for the scene, needed a week to execute most of the drawings. Then an assistant animator, also called an "in-betweener," took another few days to refine Scott's work and fill in the missing spots in those five feet of film. Scene 38 will use three and one-third seconds of screen time.



Key animator Chris Buck drew the storyboards as quickly as the scriptwriter supplied dialogue.

Before the scene was finished, however, these drawings had to be inked and colored and placed in front of a background created by production designer Michael Giaimo, who for months had been developing the project's overall look. Giaimo's research took him to various Los Angeles movie houses, where he sketched snack bars, seats and postmodern architecture, borrowing details for the 100-theater "cinemimum" where most of *Box Office Bunny* takes place. (He was almost ejected from one theater lobby as soon as he pulled out his sketchbook, but he told the security guard he was an art student and was allowed to stay.)

In keeping with Bugs' legacy of cutting-edge satire, Giaimo and Van Citters settled on a futuristic visual tone that pokes fun at the geometric design of many of today's new movie houses. Giaimo, who favors bright colors, even helped update the signature Warner Bros. bull's-eye that begins each short, working with more vibrant, complementary hues than the subtle gradations used in the past.

The music, too, blends Bugs' topicality with past glories. While Van Citters is not tinkering with the Looney Tunes opening theme, Carney's script does include a sequence that should delight pop-culture trendies. It occurs when, dashing across the front of the theater, Bugs, Elmer and Daffy are suddenly slowed by the stickiness of the floor. They struggle to extricate their feet, creating a rhythm that evolves into the aptly named "The Sticky Floor Rap," a break dance with a

That scene will require about 80 frames of film—maybe 50 to 70 separate drawings—and will use three and one-third seconds of screen time.



Postproduction supervisor Jim Champin matched the characters' dialogue to their movements.

percussive, scratch-rap sound track and some steps that Elmer never dreamed he could execute.

Trouble is, Van Citters also had difficulty picturing the moves. An avid ballroom dancer with a natural sense of rhythm, he admits rap dancing is out of his realm.

The problem was solved when Helppie agreed to spring for a choreographer and three kids to create and perform "The Sticky Floor Rap" on a Los Angeles soundstage. The dancers put together a series of steps that Van Citters and a free-lance cinematographer captured on film. The animators could now study individual frames of film to create more believable character movements.

It was another small coup, one of many that always seemed to be followed by the same results—a lot more so-called "pencil mileage" for Van Citters' team, who may never achieve the widespread public recognition their unglamorous work deserves. This dawned on animator Bob Scott at lunch one day, when he remarked, "If we were doing live action, Darrell would be famous after this." True, it took Bugs Bunny's early directors nearly a half-century to achieve their measure of fame. But hang in there, guys. It'll probably happen to you, too. ▼

Eric Estrin is a Los Angeles-based journalist and screenwriter.

LOONEY LARYNX

Jeff Bergman idolized Mel Blanc. Now he gets to perform the voices of Bugs, Daffy and Elmer himself.



JEFF BERGMAN WAS a speech major at the University of Pittsburgh when Mel Blanc performed there in 1981. A gifted mimic who did some voice work for the school radio station, Bergman was such a Blanc fan that he found out where the voice maestro was staying and knocked on his motel room door after the show.

"I love you, you're my idol, please let me in or I'll kill you," is the way Bergman recalls making his pitch that midnight. Blanc complied, and spent the next 45 minutes critiquing the young man's impressions and coaching him on how to advance his career.

"For me, that was the turning point," says Bergman, who until then had never concentrated much on cartoon voices. "He was such a great man, so supportive. Right there, I said to myself, 'Someday I'm going to do these voices that he does.' I just knew it."

Cut to 1986. Bergman has been working steadily as a performer and voice artist. (He was Popeye for a Quaker Oats campaign, and Charlie the Tuna for StarKist after Herschel Bernardi died.) But in his spare time, he's focused on mastering Bugs, Daffy Duck, Sylvester and all of the hundreds of other voices that were in Mel Blanc's Warner Bros. arsenal for half a century. He gets a meeting with some of the studio's television brass and plays them a Bugs Bunny videotape he's redubbed to include Blanc's work on one channel and his own on the other. Switching back and forth between the two speakers, it's hard to tell which voice is which.

"They thought I did a pretty good job," says the gutsy Bergman, who lives with his wife Cindy far from the Hollywood hubbub in Yardley, Pennsylvania. "But Mel was still around, and they respected that. We all did."

On July 10, 1989—Bergman's 29th birthday—the legendary Blanc passed away. Meanwhile studio heads had been planning to make a new short feature to mark Bugs Bunny's 50th birthday. When *Box Office Bunny* went into production a few months later, Bergman was one of several auditioners hoping to do the voices. Bergman landed all three roles: Bugs, Daffy and Elmer Fudd.

Whether Bergman will maintain the lock on these characters that his predecessor held for so long remains to be seen, but Bergman certainly hopes so. "I want to help Bugs Bunny live on for another 50 years," he says. "Bugs is one of the most versatile characters ever. He's cool, smug and brash, a master of disguises, and yet he's endearing. The odd part about it is, I believe Bugs Bunny is a real person. There's something strange and perverse about that, but it's true."

Mel Blanc couldn't have said it better himself.

—E.E.



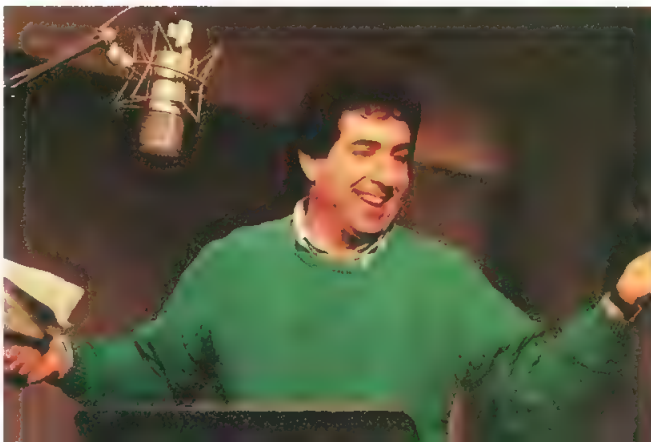
BUGS: You know, some days I'm ashamed of myself.



DAFFY: Seven bucks for a movie? Preposterous!



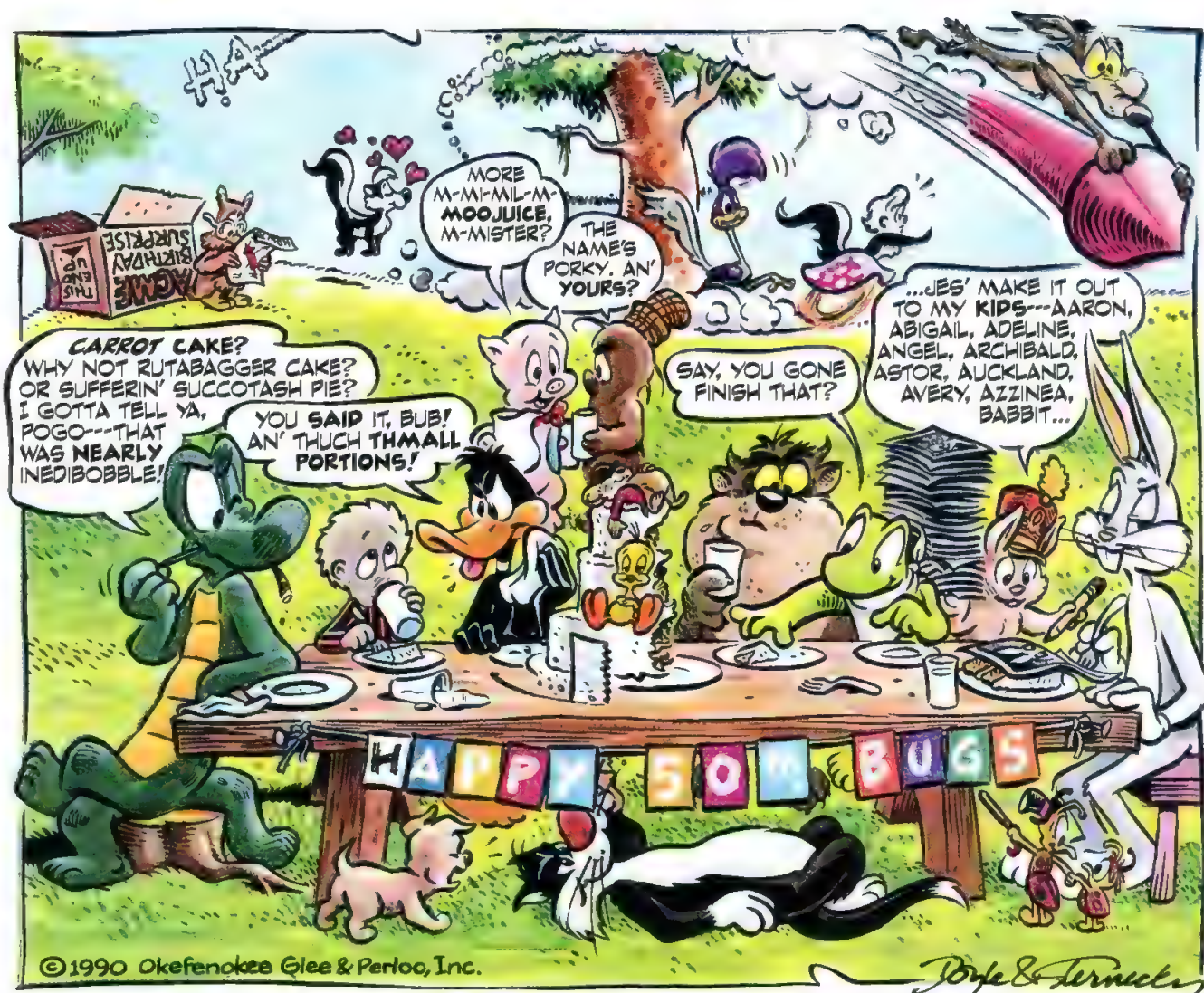
ELMER: Say, have you seen a wabbit wun by here?



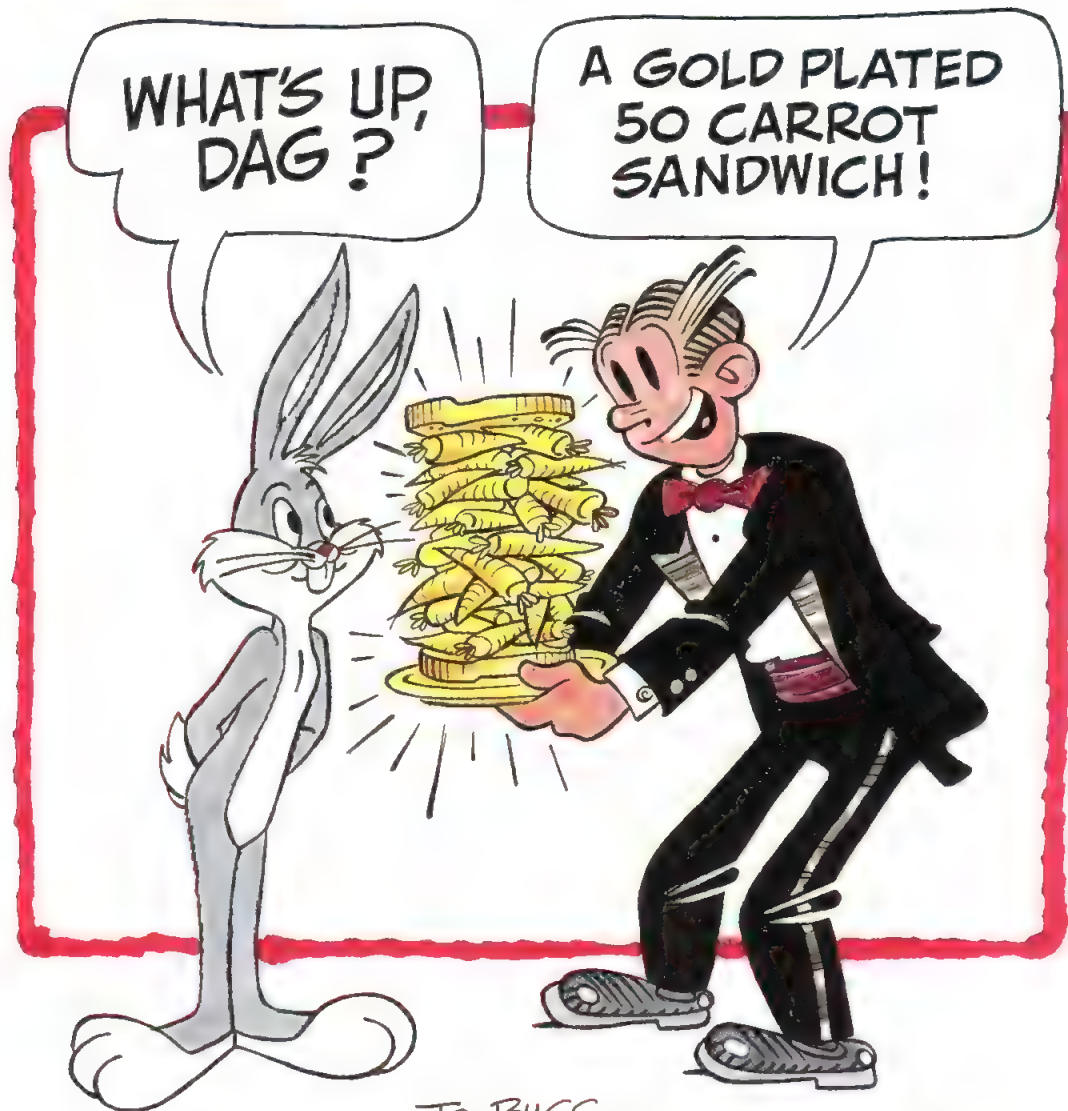
RABBIT ROAST

America's top cartoon characters dish up a 50th-birthday tribute to Bugs Bunny's long, drawn-out career.

POGO by Larry Doyle and Neal Sternecky



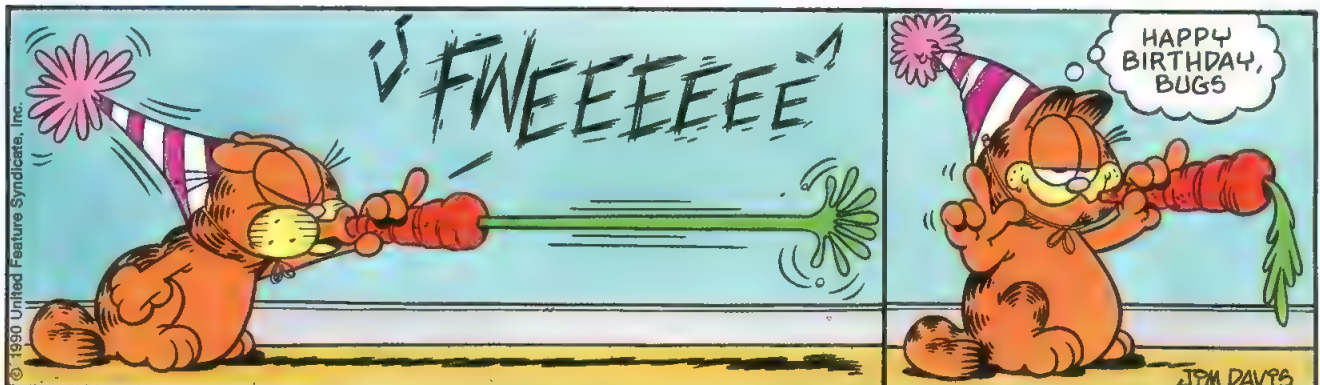
BLONDIE by Dean Young and Stan Drake



© 1990K15

TO BUGS...
CONGRATULATIONS AND
WARMEST BEST WISHES FROM **BLONDIE**
ON YOUR 50TH!! **DEAN YOUNG**
& **STAN DRAKE**

GARFIELD by Jim Davis



I MUST SAY YOU WEAR YOUR AGE WELL, BUT DONTCHA THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU SENT IT TO THE CLEANERS TO HAVE THE WRINKLES PRESSED OUT?



Daffy Duck

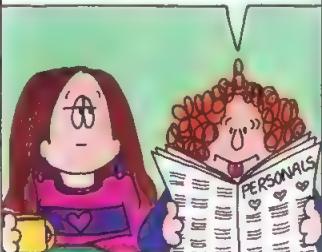
HOW COULD ANYONE LIVE IN A HOLE AND EAT CARROTS FOR FIFTY YEARS?



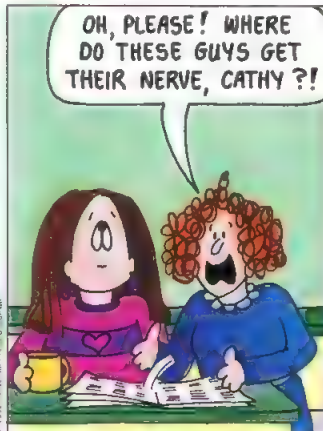
© 1958 UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE, INC.

CATHY by Cathy Guisewite

"FABULOUSLY SUCCESSFUL 50-YEAR OLD ANIMAL WITH BIG FEET AND BUCK TEETH SEEKS FUN-LOVING VEGETARIAN TO GO HOPPING AROUND TOWN WITH ME."



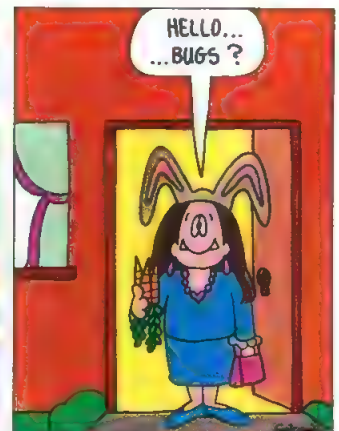
OH, PLEASE! WHERE DO THESE GUYS GET THEIR NERVE, CATHY?!



...AND EVEN WORSE, THERE'S PROBABLY SOME WOMAN OUT THERE WHO'D THINK AN EGO LIKE THAT WAS CUTE!!



HELLO...
...BUGS?



BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



HAPPY 50TH, BUGS!

Beetle Bailey
Sgt Smorkel
© KING FEATURES

FIFTY?!
YOU NO SPRING
CHICKEN ANYMORE...
...MORE LIKE
AUTUMN TURKEY!



ZIGGY by Tom Wilson

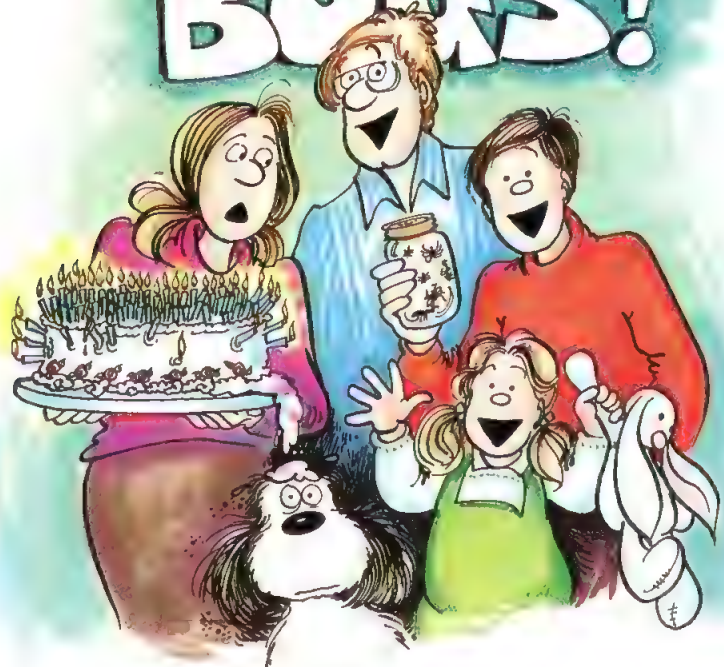


HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
THE RACKIN'-FRACKIN'EST
VARMINT WHO EVER
FRACKED A RACKIN'!



Yosemite Sam

HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY
BUGS!



FROM THE PATTERNS OF
"FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE"

Lynn Johnston

TANK McNAMARA

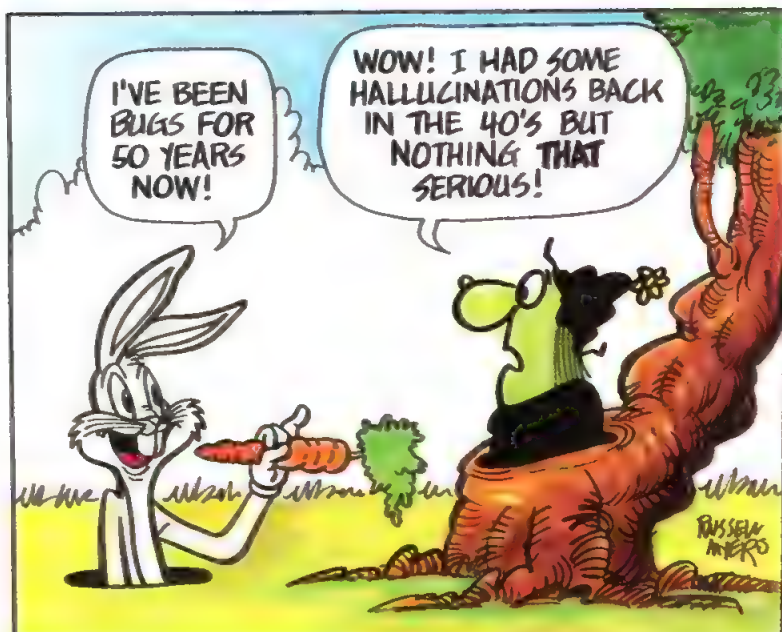
by Bill Hinds and Jeff Millar



MILLAR/HINDS

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BROOM-HILDA by Russell Myers



BROOM-HILDA © 1990 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Inc. All Rights Reserved

CONGRATULATIONS ON
WEACHING THIS
MIWACULOUS
WANDMARK
IN YOUR
IWUSTWEEOUS
WIFE.... YOU OL'
WASCAL, YOU



Elmer Fudd

THE SIMPSONS by Matt Groening



MATT GROENING

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LONGING TO FEEL
YOUNG AGAIN?
... THEN SLIP INTO
A DIAPER AND
SUCK DOWN SOME
STRAINED CARROTS!



Sylvester

WHAT'S
UP,
DOC?

GOOD NEWS!
YOU'RE IN GREAT SHAPE
FOR A FIFTY-YEAR-OLD! —
GREAT CARDIO-VASCULAR EFFICIENCY;
LOW CHOLESTEROL; LOW BODY
FAT. TERRIFIC MUSCLE FLEXIBILITY!

A PERFECT VEGETARIAN/
DIET! KEEP IT UP,
BUGS!

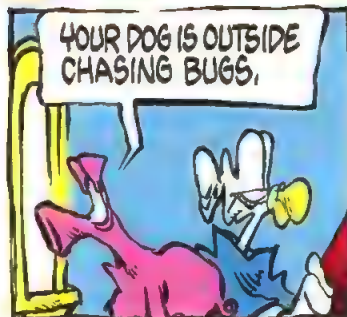
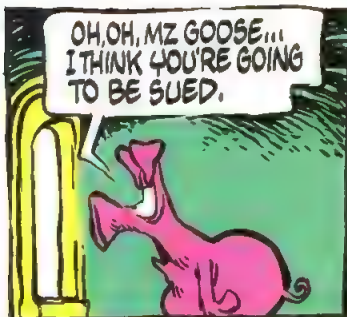
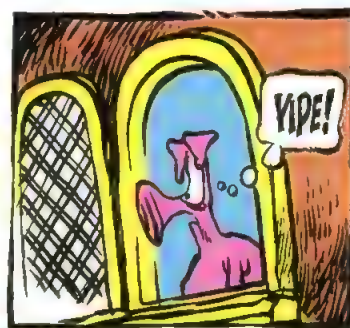
YOU'LL
LAST
FOREVER!



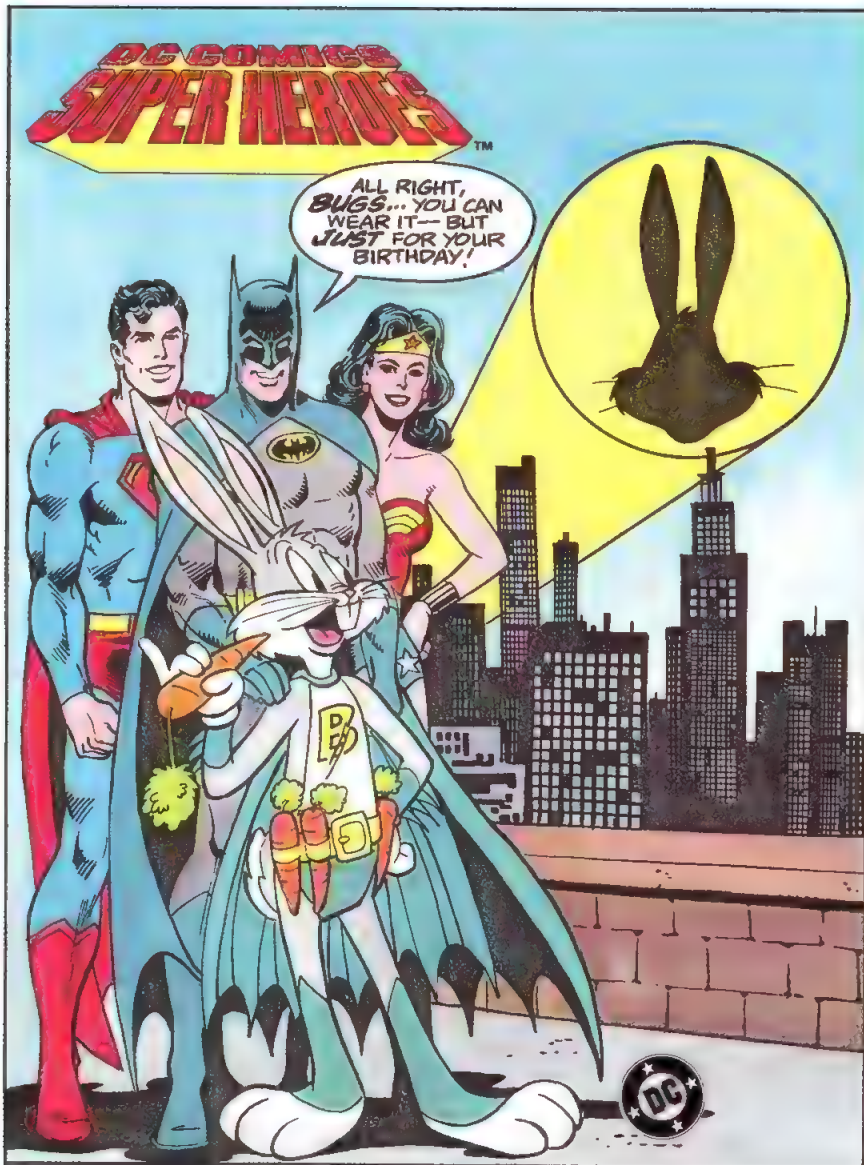
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by Mike Peters

Mother Goose & GRIMM



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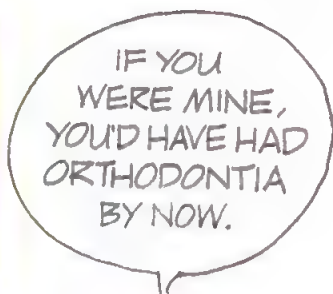
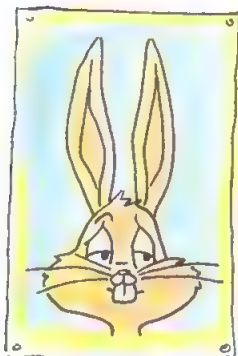


LIFE IN HELL by Matt Groening



H-HAPPY B-B-B-B-
BIR-BIR-BIRTH-BIRTH-
BIR-B-B-B-B-B-BIRTH-
B-B...BIR-BIR EHHH...
...HAPPY
FIFTIETH!

MOMMA by Mell Lazarus



Happy Birthday,
BUGS... from
"MOMMA" +
MELL LAZARUS.



Porky Pig

T MASTER LOONSMITHS

Two legendary animation directors tell how they helped make Bugs Bunny what he is today, why he'll always be popular—and who they'd invite to a dinner party in his honor.

CHUCK JONES

OF THE 175 BUGS BUNNY cartoons filmed during the past half-century, Chuck Jones directed more than 50 of them. While he did not actually create Bugs—a paternity suit would reveal Tex Avery, who directed the first Bugs Bunny cartoon, as the rambunctious rabbit's true father—he was present at the bunny's birth, nurtured him through childhood and imbued him with many of the traits film audiences have grown to love. Now 77, Jones lives in Newport Beach, California, where journalist **Steve Oney** spoke with him in his office. "White haired and white bearded, Chuck Jones is simultaneously sweet and delightfully pungent," Oney reports. "During our interview, he sat at his drawing table fiddling with a pencil and sometimes sketching, but words seem to be his true medium. Indeed, Jones bears a striking resemblance to Mark Twain—not only in appearance but also in personality. He keeps a leather-bound volume of Twain's *Roughing It* above his work area, and though he's certainly too modest to say so, his conversation sparkles with Twainlike wit. And certainly, Twain's spirit lives on in Bugs Bunny." *Continued on page 44*



Yeah, dey're great guys—but dey draw on me for inspiration.

FRIZ FRELENG

IDENTIFIED FOR YEARS as "that Oscar-winning rabbit," Bugs Bunny owes his statuette to Friz Freleng, director of the Academy Award-winning *Knighty Knight Bugs*. Freleng, who directed many of Bugs' greatest cartoons, is one of the hare's few surviving fathers. Freleng could, in fact, be considered the father of the entire Warner Bros. cartoon stable, having fought with management in the mid-'30s to establish the principle that it was star personalities, not the hit songs of the studio's music portfolio, that would put the Warner cartoons on the map. At 83, Freleng is feisty and opinionated. He recently spoke with Bugs Bunny biographer **Joe Adamson**, first at the Friars Club in Beverly Hills, then at Freleng's home in nearby Westwood. Adamson, who first interviewed Freleng in 1968, reports, "Friz has approached interviews gingerly in the past, uncertain whether there was anything to say about the exceptional work he's done, or whether he was the man to say it. But now that he's the guest of honor at Warner cartoon retrospectives, few things give him more joy than to recount his experiences with The Rabbit." *Continued on page 42*



Jones (left) and Freleng claim that they can see parts of themselves in Bugs.

Q: Why is *Bugs Bunny* as popular now as he was in the '40s?

FRELENG: I think he's really more popular now than he was then. I guess it's nostalgia for old cartoons. But even the younger people have seen them and seen them and seen them. I guess they compare them to what's being made lately on TV.

Q: They always get cheers when theaters show retrospectives.

FRELENG: There are no bad ones today. I see some that, to us, were big flops at the time, but now there are no failures at all. Some just get more laughs than others. You can run old ones or new ones, and you'll get the same audience that's been coming there and paying to see them when they've seen them a hundred times on TV. I guess it's to be with the crowd.

Q: What was the original concept of *Bugs*?

FRELENG: The first Bugs doesn't look anything like the Bugs we have today. He was a white, little, short-legged thing, and he walked around like Groucho Marx, pacing back and forth. He was a real idiot. Instead of a cigar, he had a carrot in his mouth. Then the cockiness crept in, and the whole gimmick was a rabbit that wasn't afraid of a guy with a gun who was hunting him. He'd outsmart him. That was the basis for the character: He had no fear.



© 1957 VITAPHONE CORP.

KNIGHTY KNIGHT BUGS (1958): In his only Academy Award-winning performance, Bugs sets out to rescue the Singing Sword from the Black Knight and his sneezing dragon.

Q: In what way does *Bugs* reflect your personality?

FRELENG: I can't recognize that. Maybe other people can. We all imitated somebody else. We took a little bit from what (the other directors) put in, added our own thing. You have a little bit of those personalities all combined. I don't think any one person can take the credit for the character and for the kind of shows that we made. Maybe the story line was our choice, but the character became a standard character, and we all guided it to be sure it didn't become something else.

Q: Were you ever afraid of going offtrack with *Bugs*' character?

FRELENG: We used to go into meetings every once in a while and say, "Look, we're losing Bugs. He's not as bright and mischievous as he was." And we'd look at some of the new pictures, then look at

some of the old pictures, and say, "He's slowed down. He's getting to be an old man. Let's bring this kid back." As we were getting older, he was getting older without our realizing it. We had to remind ourselves to snap him up and get him a little peppier and brighter. We were continuously reminding ourselves we could lose the character very easily.

Q: Do you have a favorite *Bugs Bunny* cartoon?

FRELENG: There's some I enjoy seeing over and over again. Like *Rhapsody Rabbit*, where Bugs plays the "Hungarian Rhapsody"; the piano was actually played by Jakob Gimpel, the famous pianist. To snap up my animation, I had Gimpel play at a speed that he had never dreamed of playing in his life. His fingers were bleeding by the time I got through with him.

Q: You once mentioned that your problem with *Elmer Fudd* was that he wasn't interesting.

FRELENG: Elmer was just too dumb. He was naive and childish and Bugs outwitted him. It didn't take much brains to outwit Elmer. Sometimes you felt sorry for Elmer. He'd break down and cry. But that's why I didn't quite feel that Elmer filled the bill. He wasn't really a villain; he was a pitiful character. He had a duty to perform as a hunter, he had to go shoot a rabbit. But there wasn't a mean streak—he didn't really like to shoot the rabbit. You wondered why you didn't hate Bugs for doing what he did to him.

Q: So you had to invent *Yosemite Sam*?

FRELENG: Yeah, because Elmer was just a victim of a smart rabbit. Sam was such a violent character, he didn't have to stop and think and plot, like Elmer did. Yosemite Sam's temper motivated him, and Bugs coped with his violence very well. They made a good team because of that. It got away from the hunter and the rabbit, which you can't do forever. It took a little more sharpness to outsmart Yosemite Sam than a chicken-brained Elmer Fudd.

Q: You always tried to create new villains for *Bugs* to outwit.

FRELENG: But we had to be careful not to have the other character steal the picture from Bugs. No matter how strong they were, he was always on top of the situation; he never took second place.

Q: If you had a dinner party for *Bugs*, who would you invite?

FRELENG: Well, it would have to be Daffy, wouldn't it? Or Yosemite Sam.

Q: Who else?

FRELENG: You mean to create a situation?

Q: That's what you're automatically thinking, isn't it?

FRELENG: Sure. The only reason you put those things together is to create a conflict. With Bugs and Daffy, it's just jealousy, mostly. And with Sam, it's just aggressiveness. The only thing that made Bugs work was conflict.

Q: *Bugs* is 50 now, but how old do you envision him to be?

FRELENG: Gosh, it's a nondescript age, isn't it? Eighteen? Twenty? He's not a kid and he's not fully matured, either. But he's sharp. I would guess he's college age. Yeah, he'd be the leader of a college group.

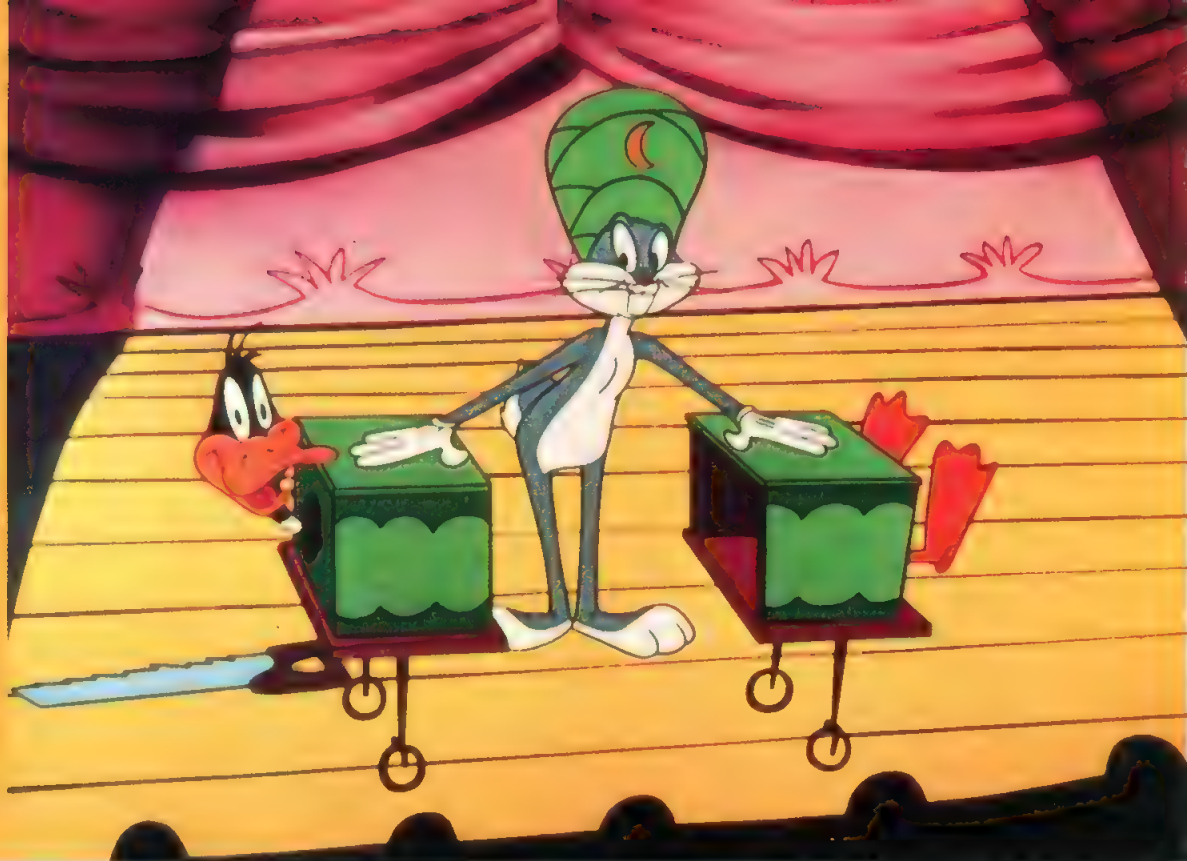
Q: Did you think of children when you made the cartoons?

FRELENG: Of course not. We thought of a nighttime theater audience. The only time children saw them was at Saturday matinees. I don't think any of us thought for any age really. I made them to entertain myself—what I thought was funny, what I would enjoy. We never had kids in mind.

Q: It's funny that some people are just realizing that now.

FRELENG: That's why it's so wonderful to go in these theaters where they're running these Warner cartoons. Just mention my name (at Looney Tunes festivals) and, my god, the audience reacts like their childhood has come back or something. Ask them who Lafayette was and they wouldn't know. Ask them who John Pershing was, the World War I commander of American forces in France, they wouldn't know. But they surely know Friz Freleng and

SHOW BIZ BUGS (1957): Daffy Duck angrily discovers that he is taking second billing to Bugs, and unsuccessfully tries to impress a vaudeville-hall audience. As a dance team, Bugs effortlessly gets all the applause while Daffy's energetic stunts fail to wow 'em. Daffy even flubs his attempt to expose Bugs' magic act.



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Chuck Jones. I'm very gratified that I got a chance to see the way the audience reacts to these things. Chuck and I enjoy the fun of it all now. We didn't get it when we were doing it.

Q: *Why not?*

FRELENG: There wasn't that much attention. But now there's so much written about these cartoons, so much publicity, that when people hear my name, they know who I am. When I went to this (Looney Tunes retrospective) in Cannes, they stood up and applauded forever; I didn't think it was going to stop. And that's in France.

Q: *I found a 1945 New York Times article about Bugs in which you said, "We don't want to give him a girlfriend." What was the thinking behind that?*

FRELENG: I thought it would just detract from him, really. I didn't think of him in terms of any sexual relationship at all. He was a fantasy character, as far as I was concerned. I didn't want to make him too human; I didn't want him to have the same weaknesses that people have. And what good would a female character do for Bugs? I don't think it would add anything.

Q: *Is that also why he didn't have any kids?*

FRELENG: You don't want to put him in the same situation as people. He's a fantasy character and he lives in a fantasy world. You start making a family man out of him, he's not Bugs Bunny anymore.

Q: *He's not a human...*

FRELENG: ...and he's not a rabbit, either. You could probably make him with ears or without ears, it wouldn't make any difference. He was cast as a rabbit, so they call him a rabbit.

Q: *What kind of career do you think Bugs would pursue?*

FRELENG: You're thinking of him in human terms again. I don't think he belongs in this world, so I can't quite relate him to what goes on here. I think of him living in a complete fantasy world.

Q: *That sort of relates to the violence issue, doesn't it? Because it's really not violent.*

FRELENG: That's right. It's like the Coyote falling down 2,000 feet and hitting bottom, and you laugh. If you saw a guy falling from the ledge of a 10-story building, you wouldn't laugh. You'd cringe,

you'd look away. There's that difference, realism and fantasy.

Q: *How did you become an animator?*

FRELENG: Accidentally. I got into it when I answered an ad that asked for an office boy who could draw. I ended up doing animation because there was nobody to do it but me. Whatever I did, they accepted. There weren't any standards at that time.

Q: *And you had always been drawing, right?*

FRELENG: Well, I drew, but I thought of being a newspaper cartoonist. That was my ambition. I didn't know how animation was done or how it ever got on the screen. I never gave it much thought. Like people watching television—they don't know how it got there, they just watch it.

Q: *What would you say makes a good animation director?*

FRELENG: Well, you have to be that character. When you're putting that down, you're doing the acting with a pencil. And the ability you have of getting those expressions and attitudes down on paper, you can transfer to the next guy, the animator. But if you don't put that down, he's not going to be able to do it. You're Santa Claus with a lot of elves. My personality must come through—it has to come from me. That's why nobody can ever do Yosemite Sam the same as I did.

Q: *Personality. That was your main area of concentration at Warner Bros., wasn't it?*

FRELENG: Oh, yes. You can make an animated cartoon as believable as you can a human in live action. Bugs is one of those characters that you really believe exists, because I thought of Bugs myself as a character that exists. You don't want to destroy the idea in the minds of your audience that the character is believable.

Q: *Can the current generation of animators rival your work?*

FRELENG: Well, I recently got this reel from Warner Bros. with the characters from *Tiny Toon Adventures*. I thought they animated it very well. It's as good as we could have done. In fact, in places, some of it's better.

Q: *Do you think Bugs will still be popular in the year 2040?*

FRELENG: I think he's a classic character. I believe he'll live on for years to come. ▼



WHAT'S OPERA, DOC?
(1957): Elmer is Siegfried and Bugs is Brunhilde in this elaborate spoof of Wagner's *Ring* cycle—which doubles as a brilliant parody of the eternal Elmer-hunts-Bugs theme. A technical tour de force, it uses more inventive camera angles, costumes and scenery than many live-action films.

CHUCK JONES *Continued from page 40*

Q: Back in 1940, did you have any idea that moviegoers might one day be celebrating Bugs' 50th birthday?

JONES: No. If somebody had asked me about any of the Warner Bros. pictures being alive in 50 years, I would have said it's about as likely as a man landing on the moon. Why? In 1940, there wasn't any television. So we expected our films would be retired. Each studio was making about 30 cartoons a year, so the idea of replaying them was bad business.

Q: What is it about Bugs Bunny's character that's so enduring?

JONES: In the first picture, Bugs just came out and bedeviled Elmer Fudd. Well, we couldn't let that continue. He couldn't be a bully, a Woody Woodpecker. Otherwise, he would have become impossible. So at the beginning of every picture, we put him in a situation that was natural for a rabbit—down a hole or in the woods. The main thing was to have Bugs innocently minding his own business. I compare him to Rex Harrison as Professor Higgins, a quiet rabbit living in his hole and perhaps pursuing the history of legumes—he's that elegant a person. So if somebody comes along and disturbs his tranquility, wants to kill him or send him off in a rocket, that does something to him. At that point, Bugs joyfully joins the conflict. "Of course you realize, this means war," he says. And from then on, he will do what's necessary. I like to think of him as Douglas Fairbanks or Errol Flynn playing Robin Hood. Plus Dorothy Parker, because most of his stuff is done verbally. He doesn't usually fight physically. He usually takes care of matters by bedazzling and puzzling his opponents. He's a real comic hero, and that's what's so attractive.

Q: A half-century after he first chomped on a carrot, Bugs Bunny continues to win higher Nielsen ratings than his Saturday-morning cartoon competitors. Why?

JONES: To me, what's basically wrong with all the Saturday-morning cartoons is that they imply that the only way you can triumph is to get together. The Smurfs always get together. So do the rest of

them. With Bugs, the thing of vital importance is the *individual*. For a kid watching, it means, "You count." So if you admire Bugs and you like Bugs, then there's the possibility that you too can handle difficult situations.

Q: *Ironical, clever, sophisticated*—all those adjectives describe Bugs Bunny. Did you ever worry that children might miss the punch lines?

JONES: Never. Bugs might say to Elmer, "What's up, my little Nimrod?" Well, how many children—how many grown-ups, for that matter—know that Nimrod is a hunter in the Bible? Not many, but why not use it? When I did *Bully for Bugs* (1953), I studied bullfighting, so Bugs wore the suit of lights that all the matadors wear. It just seemed proper. I figured as long as we're doing this, we might as well have fun. And I think it worked very well. Plenty of adults tell me that they enjoyed the cartoons when they saw them as kids, and then enjoyed them again when they were old enough to understand the references.

Q: How did Bugs Bunny get his name?

JONES: Back in 1937, we had a writer named Bugs Hardaway who was working on a picture called *Porky's Hare Hunt*. Bugs wanted a rabbit for the picture, but he didn't draw very well. So he asked an animator named Charlie Thorson to draw a rabbit. Charlie made up this drawing—it didn't look anything like the Bugs of today, but it looked like a rabbit. He sent it back, and because it was for Bugs Hardaway, he put "Bugs' Bunny" on it. If it had been for me, he'd have said "Chuck's Bunny." Anyway, everybody saw it, and we realized that this was a good name.

Q: In this same vein, how did Bugs come by his famous signature line, "What's up, Doc?"

JONES: Well, that came about because Tex Avery said that where he went to school in Texas, everybody used the term "Doc" the way you might use "Mac" if you were asking "What's up, Mac?" So, it was natural for him to use it. Later, we did variations on the line. Bugs would say to Daffy, "What's up, Duck?"

Q: One of the things that makes Bugs Bunny funny is the way he

carries himself on screen. How did you create this quality?

JONES: Bugs always strikes an attitude. When Elmer is firing into his hole, Bugs is always leaning over him. If Bugs wasn't looking over Elmer's shoulder, if the two of them were just standing there, it wouldn't be funny when Bugs says, "What's up, Doc?" But because he's in close juxtaposition to Elmer, it's funny. Same thing when Bugs would lean on the barrel of Elmer's gun and say, "You're shooting rabbit without a rabbit license." So it's the incongruity of the action in relationship to what Bugs is saying. Much of all comedy is incongruity.

Q: *What real-life historical character most reminds you of Bugs?*

JONES: Franklin Roosevelt, because he was always able to turn something around and make the person who said it look idiotic. I mean, his sons once came to him and complained about some of the things critics were saying about their family, and he told them, "Never get into a pissing contest with a skunk." Well, that's beautiful. That's worthy of Bugs.

Q: *If you were casting a live actor in the role of Bugs, who would you choose?*

JONES: Steve Martin is probably as close as you could get, or maybe Robin Williams. I think they would get inside of him. In a way, though, the question is fruitless, because the very nature of Bugs is that he has to look like Bugs. The one person I'd never let play Bugs is Jerry Lewis; he'd just go running off with the gags.

Q: *If you were throwing a dinner party in Bugs Bunny's honor, who would you invite?*

JONES: They'd all have to be people who were daring and interesting in their own way. They'd all have to have wit. Obviously, Mark Twain would be one. Another would be Daniel Webster, particularly as he was in *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. Charlie Chaplin would be a wonderful person to have, as would Buster Keaton, as would the young Charles Dickens, the Dickens of *The Pickwick Papers*. And I think Jack Kennedy would be in there. And, oh yes, Richard Nixon—if he wanted to get in trouble. In fact, you'd invite him for just that reason.

Q: *What aspects of your own personality ended up in Bugs Bunny?*

JONES: Dreams. That's the way I'd like to be. I'd like to be readily equipped to turn near disaster into triumph. That's what we all want. Bugs represents my aspirations.

Q: *What, exactly, does a cartoon director do?*

JONES: The director has absolute responsibility for the film. He's in the same position as a conductor of an orchestra—in a sense, he's the orchestra too. At Warner Bros.—though it was not true of the entire industry—the director began by doing all the key drawings, those showing the expressions, the faces, the physical attitudes of the characters. All told, you'd do 300 or 400 of the ultimate 5,000 drawings that make up a six-minute cartoon.

Meanwhile, the director and the story man got together and created a storyboard, and the director and the set designer designed the picture. Then we timed the picture completely on exposure sheets. Say, if Bugs was walking, he'd make two steps every second. Before a word of dialogue was recorded, the whole picture was timed this way. Then the director wrote the dialogue and the actors were called in to record it. Then the director instructed the sound editor where to put in the dialogue. And finally, when it was all completed, you pared the thing down, because it had to be exactly 540 feet long—your producer wouldn't let you make it any longer, and the exhibitor wouldn't accept it any shorter. If I'd have known how difficult all this was, I probably would have picked some other way to make a living.

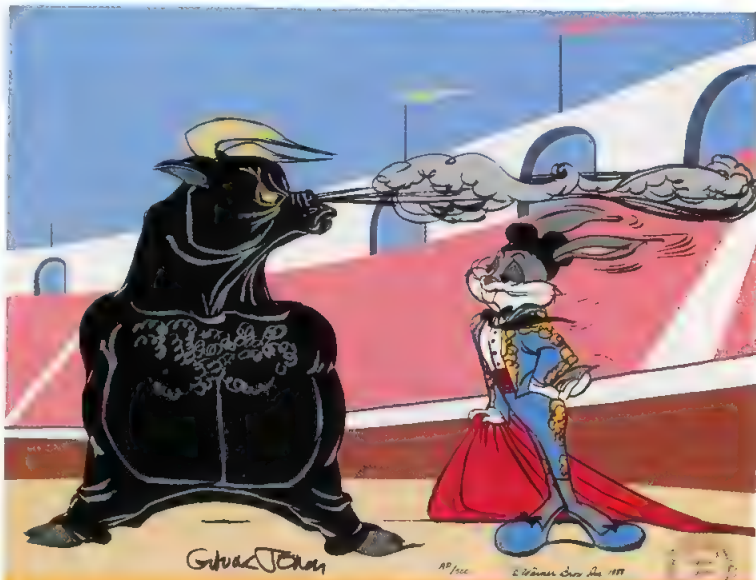
Q: *What childhood influences led you to become a cartoonist?*

JONES: The basic reason I kept drawing was that my parents didn't fall into the trap that usually stops people from drawing. All children draw, and all children draw well, especially when they're five or six

years old. But they don't understand perspective. Now, a kid will make a small drawing of himself standing next to a huge flower that's taller than he is. Many parents would say, "That's very nice, but a flower is smaller than you." But the important point is this: The first time you discover a flower or anything else that impresses you, you're going to draw it big. In African art, when they're drawing a lion, they always draw the lion huge, even if it's a mile away. So my mother, who loved children and who drew quite well herself, simply never criticized me if I made a flower bigger than a kid.

Q: *Fifty years from now, in the year 2040, do you think Bugs Bunny will still be making people laugh?*

JONES: Yes, if only because our stuff appears to have a certain timeless quality to it. From the moment we started working on a picture until it hit the theaters, it might take three years, so we studiously avoided anything relating to *now*. Once in a while, something would sneak in. In *High Diving Hare* (1949), Yosemite Sam kept trying to make Bugs do a 100-foot dive from atop a ladder into a bucket of water. But Bugs kept thwarting him—Sam would always be the one that fell off. At some point, Bugs puts a doorway on the diving board. Sam hammers on it, saying, "Open the door. Open the door." Then he turns to the audience and says, "You notice I didn't say Richard." Well, there was a very popular song two years earlier called "Open the Door, Richard." Today, kids see this film and say, "Who's Richard?" Well, that was just one of those slips of the sort that we fortunately usually avoided. There's no reason why Bugs shouldn't be as valid 50 years from now as he was 50 years ago. He hasn't aged.



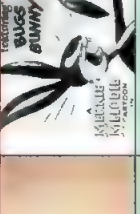
BULLY FOR BUGS (1953): Bugs misses that left turn at Albuquerque and finds himself in a Mexican bullring. Butted sky-high, he declares: "Of course you realize, this means war!"

Q: *Granted complete control and a tremendous budget, would you like to direct more Bugs Bunny cartoons?*

JONES: Yes. That's my genre. That's where I live. As a matter of fact, I'm doing a three-minute title with Bugs and Daffy Duck for a new Warner Bros. movie. It's Bugs and Daffy actually trying to decide who will do the titles on the picture. And I'm going to do another Bugs cartoon for Warner Bros.—at least I expect to. After all, I'm only 77. ▼

BUGS BUNNY'S FOUNDING FATHERS: THE BRAINS BEHIND THE HARE

By Jerry Beck

NAME	FRED AVERY (1908-1980)	MEL BLANC (1908-1989)	ROBERT CLAMPETT (1913-1984)	ISADORE FRELENG (1906-)	CHARLES M. JONES (1912-)	ROBERT MCKIMSON (1911-1977)	CARL STALLING (1888-1972)	FRANK TASHLIN (1913-1972)
A.K.A. CREDITED NICKNAME	Tex Avery	"The Man of a Thousand Voices"	Bob Clampett	Friz Freleng or I. Freleng	Chuck Jones	Bob McKimson		Tish-Tash or Frank Tash
POSITION	Director	Voice Characterization	Animator/Director	Animator/Director	Animator/Director	Animator/Director	Musical Direction	Director
NUMBER OF BUGS CLASSIC SHORT CARTOONS (1940-1964)	4	171	12	62	50	36	132	2
FIRST & LAST BUGS BUNNY FILMS	<i>A Wild Hare</i> (1940) to <i>All This and Rabbit Stew</i> (1941)	<i>A Wild Hare</i> (1940) to <i>Bugs Bunny's Wild World of Sports</i> (TV special, 1989)	<i>Wabbit Twouble</i> (1941) to <i>The Big Stoopie</i> (1946)	<i>Hiawatha's Rabbit Hunt</i> (1941) to <i>Bugs Bunny's Third Movie: 1001 Rabbit Tales</i> (feature, 1982)	<i>Elmer's Candid Camera</i> (1940) to <i>Spaced Out Bunny</i> (1980)	<i>Acrobatty Bunny</i> (1946) to <i>False Hare</i> (1964)	<i>A Wild Hare</i> (1940) to <i>Pikers Peak</i> (1957)	<i>The Unruly Hare</i> (1945) to <i>Hare Remover</i> (1946)
BEST BUGS BUNNY MOMENT								
QUOTE	"In the beginning he wasn't pleasant, but we kept refining him until we had a good-looking rabbit. But that came about through one cartoon after another — evolution."	"Bugs possessed Clark Gable's impertinence, Bogart's cool-headedness and Cagney's New York-bred toughness. We cheer him because he's got the moxie to say and do what he wants."	"Bugs' personality was quite the opposite of Porky Pig's, and much more fun to do. When I do Bugs, I get inside him, and I not only think like, feel like, walk and talk like him, but confidentially, I AM THE WABBIT!"	"When my oldest daughter went to school, she was embarrassed to tell people that her father made Bugs Bunny. Her two front teeth came in big and they teased her, 'I know where your daddy got the idea for Bugs Bunny. So she wouldn't tell anyone.'"	"I felt that somebody should always try to impose his will on Bugs. That gave him a reason to act, and I couldn't understand a character unless he had a reason for what he did."	"Bugs Bunny, after five or six pictures, was thought to be exhausted. But we always came up with new ideas. Bugs did everything that people would love to do, but don't dare."	"Each character had a different feeling. Each was enjoyable, but there weren't any that were especially enjoyable to work with — unless it was Bugs Bunny. He was a standout."	"A lot of our humor came from the Jack Benny radio show. Characters would come in, do one-liners and leave. We used that technique in our cartoons."
WORKED WITH OTHER WARNER CARTOON STARS	Porky Pig Daffy Duck Egghead	Foghorn Leghorn Yosemite Sam Speedy Gonzales Synester and hundreds more	Tweety Beaky Buzzard Grimkins Goofy Gophers	Porky Pig Yosemite Sam Synester Speedy Gonzales	Pepé Le Pew Road Runner Wile E. Coyote Marvin Martin	Foghorn Leghorn Hippety Hopper Tasmanian Devil Synester, Jr.	All	Petunia Pig
LIFE AFTER BUGS	Left Warner in 1941 to direct cartoons for MGM. Later created commercials with Roid insects and Kool-Aid spots with Bugs Bunny.	Continued to perform as Bugs' voice through 1989; also provided many character voices for TV, including Barney Rubble on <i>The Flintstones</i> , Mr. Spacely in <i>The Jetsons</i> , and the fat cat <i>Heathcliff</i> .	Left Warner in 1946 to create TV's <i>Beany & Cecil</i> ; won three Emmy awards	With producer David DePatie, went into business as DePatie Freleng and won an Oscar for creating the Pink Panther.	Directed <i>Tom and Jerry</i> (1963-1967) for MGM; won Oscar for short, <i>The Dot and the Line</i> (1965); produced award-winning TV specials.	Directed Warner cartoons through 1965, then with DePatie-Freleng	After a career in cartoons, beginning with Walt Disney, Stalling retired in 1958.	Left Warner to write live-action screenplays; went on to direct classic comedy films with Jerry Lewis and Bob Hope.



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HOLLYWOOD

Dan Romanelli has hit the jackpot by licensing the rapidly expanding roster of Warner cartoon characters. Profile by GREG CRITSER.

AGENT

IT'S 10 ON A WEDNESDAY morning, and Dan Romanelli is already restless. "Blossom!" he calls out to his secretary, "did someone bring that TV piece up yet?" Romanelli has been waiting for a cassette of a new television show that he wants to screen for his kids before he presents it at a sales meeting. This is but one of a hundred details—between meetings, phone calls and an endless succession of lunches—that occupy his daily schedule.

Consider his calendar today: There's Tim Burton, who directed *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, *Beetlejuice* and *Batman* for Warner Bros., and is one of the key creative forces in the studio's future animation plans. There's Chuck Jones, the legendary Bugs Bunny director. There are executives from such major U.S. corporations as Kenner Toys, McDonald's and Tyson Foods. Finally come executives of Time Warner Inc., with \$10.7 billion in revenues, the largest media-entertainment company in the world. The subject of almost every conversation these days? Bugs Bunny and his legendary brigade of Looney Tunes characters.

Daniel Romanelli is the president of worldwide merchandising for Warner Bros. Inc. and its affiliate, the Licensing Corporation of America (LCA), and if his schedule looks more like that of a Hollywood agent than that of a typical marketing executive, well, perhaps it should. Romanelli, a former television station manager with a Cheshire cat smile and more energy than a Tasmanian devil, has been infusing Warner's merchandising division with liberal doses of Hollywood zing. And it's been paying off. LCA has been drawing national attention ever since its marketing of

Batman cups, toys and T-shirts set a new industry licensing record last summer. His formula? Timing, packaging, a fondness for details—and a good shot of pure Hollywood schmooze.

"I'm like a kid in a toy store with money in my pockets," he says gleefully. "The pressure is to expand, to take chances."

Under Romanelli's leadership, LCA has become the equivalent of a Hollywood talent agency whose clients are among the most longevous and lucrative properties in show biz: the contract players in the Warner Bros. cartoon stable. These characters range from revered half-century-old Looney Tunes luminaries to their new juvenile counterparts, the cast of *Tiny Toon Adventures*. But the star du jour is Bugs Bunny, and Romanelli is leading his troops in the licensing and merchandising efforts for the rabbit's 50th-birthday celebration.

"What are we doing about the birthday song?" he asks one of the staff members sitting in his Bugs-and-Batman-filled office. "Let's cut a music video for it," he suggests enthusiastically. "Let's get it to cable, get it to Nickelodeon."

After the group disbands, Romanelli leans back in his chair and reflects on the peculiar nature of his position at the crossroads of Hollywood and the world of retail. "It's like being Bugs Bunny's agent," he says.

THE LICENSING OF BUGS and the Looney Tunes cast is not a new undertaking. Nor is their commercial success. Karen Spitz, Warner's vice president in charge of apparel licensing, recalls one of her first triumphs as a young licensing executive 20 years ago.

Licensing Corporation of America chief Romanelli turned *Batman* into a \$500 million merchandising bonanza. Now he's taking a rabbit to market—and returning with a gold mine.



*Psssst! Doc!
Wanna buy a used carrot?*



She had received a phone call from a New York-based lingerie manufacturer. "They asked me, 'Do you have anything for ladies sleepwear for J.C. Penney?' 'How about Looney Tunes?' I asked. Grudgingly, they went ahead with a limited line." Within a few weeks, however, demand for the product had soared so high that another subcontractor had to be retained to keep up with orders. Warner's first royalty check—an agreed upon percentage of sales (usually 5 percent) that every licensee pays—totaled \$122,000. "Nobody could believe it," Spitz says.

Spitz had unwittingly stumbled onto the key of Bugs' commercial appeal. Not only was he popular with kids, but he had an enduring appeal to adults, who appreciated the

wry sophistication of his myriad schticks.

Still, licensing—the sale of the right to apply a character to a commercial product—has long been considered the show biz equivalent of the garment industry. The work of approving slogans, overseeing the latest T-shirt designs and ferreting out counterfeiters is about as far from the klieg lights as one can get in Tinseltown. And at Warner, as at nearly every studio, "licensing and merchandising were simply not priorities," recalls Warner corporate executive vice president Sandy Reisenbach.

The 1980s, however, rearranged those priorities. The home-video market exploded and the postwar baby boom generation came of consuming age, creating enormous new markets for animated characters and

products associated with them. As Reisenbach recalls, "When we did the research, we found out how well-known Bugs was. We realized we had this family of characters that was commercially untouched, but which had been kept very much alive by TV."

Thanks to Edward Bleier, the president of Warner's animation division (see related story), Bugs' show had very quietly earned the distinction of being the longest-running cartoon series in network-television history. Today he is the top-rated cartoon character on television. And with this year's merger of Time Inc. and Warner, Bugs and friends now have a whole new venue. "It's not enough anymore to merely promote a TV show as a TV show, and a film as a film," says Terry

Kids can romp in funwear designed by Tony Guetta of Too Cute. Jacket, \$190; shorts, \$60; T-shirt, \$36.



"This is an opportunity for us to continue to build on one of our strengths—the family market. Our relationship with Warner Bros. simply signals a stronger emphasis on this market. We chose Bugs Bunny and Looney Tunes because of their appeal not only to kids but to whole families as well." ▼ J. RAYMOND LEWIS, senior vice president, worldwide marketing, Holiday Inns Inc.

Semel, Warner's president and chief operating officer. "Today it is also a book, a magazine, a retail-store space, a theme park. The more impressions, the better."

In effect, Warner Bros. recently came to grips with the fact that it had been sitting on one of the entertainment industry's richest gold mines; a couple of years ago, the studio began charting a plan for deliberately and aggressively mining that gold.

But the licensing of classic Warner (and D.C. Comics) characters for a wide variety of consumer products is only the beginning. The second part of the studio's expansion plan is to create more film and cartoon characters—"new gold," to use Semel's phrase—for LCA to license. Thus, a hit Warner Bros. film like *Beetlejuice* is transformed into a Saturday-morning cartoon—and then, thanks to LCA, into a lucrative line of toys, games and clothing (which, in turn, help promote the *Beetlejuice* film sequel).

Consequently, Warner is now tackling a rapidly expanding roster of animation projects. At various stages of development are: full-length features, including *The Thief and the Cobbler* (an Arabian Nights-style tale about a little cobbler who saves his city) and *Rover Dangerfield* (voiced by Rodney); *Family Dog*, a prime-time CBS series inspired by an episode of Steven Spielberg's *Amazing Stories*; a syndicated

series based on D.C. Comics' *Batman* characters; a syndicated *Gremlins* series, based on the Joe Dante-directed films; and a Quincy Jones-produced rap video featuring a new character called The Dude.

Jean MacCurdy, Warner's vice president and general manager for animation, says her staff has boomed from 15 to more than 100 in the past year. "There's a real sense that this is the time to expand and grow," she says.

With each new cartoon character comes a fresh opportunity for LCA to systematically target specific manufacturers and convince them of the wisdom of pairing their consumer products with Warner Bros.' popular and durable spokescreatures. For movie and TV audiences, Warner animation has always been calculated to get laughs; for LCA, it has also become serious business.

JUST OUT OF MICHIGAN STATE University in 1964, Dan Romanelli went to work in Warner's theatrical-distribution division, where one of his responsibilities was booking Bugs Bunny cartoons in theaters. After leaving Warner in 1968, he embarked on a successful sales and management career, at NBC, Group W, KPIX-TV in San Francisco and, in 1980, KICU-TV in San Jose.

There he got the entrepreneurial bug. As he recalls it, "Once, while I was living up north, my kids had a bake sale for their school. My wife made a carrot cake, and no one was buying any. I went home and brought back this poster of Bugs and pinned it up behind our booth with a sign that said, BUGS BUNNY CARROT CAKE. He was a great salesman. We sold out in an hour."

Intrigued by the possibilities, Romanelli acquired the cookie license for Looney Tunes in 1980, and soon had a deal with Nabisco to distribute Bugs Bunny cookies. Back at Warner, Romanelli's reputation as an entrepreneur grew.

"Dan was very creative," Semel recalls. "He was a guy who every other day had an idea for broadcast programs that lent themselves to merchandising." In 1983, when Semel was casting about for a new merchandising vice president, he called Romanelli and offered him the job. "And you're going to pay me too?" Romanelli recalls responding. "By then I was referring to Bugs as my favorite rabbit and my favorite rabbi." Romanelli packed up his family and moved to Los Angeles.

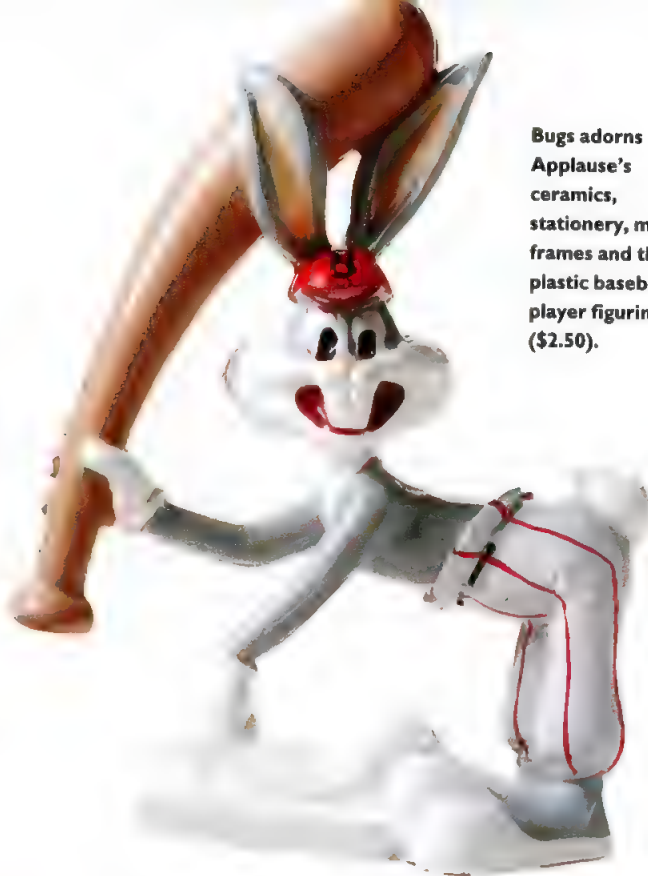
In 1986, Semel promoted Romanelli to



Help Bugs rescue Honey Bunny in Crazy Castle (\$40), one of Seika-Nintendo's new video games.

It's always time for Bugs with an Armitron watch strapped to your wrist (\$40), or pick from 22 other Looney Tunes watches (\$10-\$100).

Bugs adorns Applause's ceramics, stationery, mugs, frames and this plastic baseball-player figurine (\$2.50).



"The Bugs Bunny license is a natural for us. Action, suspense and humor is what our video games are about. And when it comes to choosing who can best play the lead, who better than the all-time irreverent, quick-witted, anarchic cartoon champ?" ▼ PETER BERGSTROM, national marketing manager, Kemco-Seika

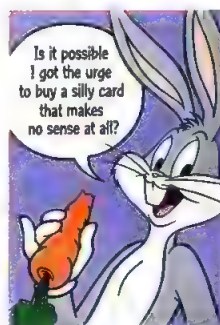




Fly high with Ertl's Bugs Bunny die-cast biplane (\$3).

"The secret to success is securing strong licenses with presold appeal. Bugs Bunny and the Looney Tunes gang are a classic in American humor and entertainment. They ensure immediate consumer recognition."

▼ HENRY A. KAPLAN, president, Hi Tech Expressions, makers of computer software for children



Hallmark presents Looney Tunes calendars, gift wrap and greeting cards (above).

his current position. Now things changed rapidly. Romanelli hired a new staff and set up four divisions—domestic, international, promotions and catalog sales. In 1988 Romanelli proceeded to do the unthinkable: He put up for review all of the company's licensees, determining which ones were innovative and which ones weren't. If they weren't committed to the cause, they were replaced by more devoted competitors. Within a year, half of them were gone.

"Dan wasn't by the book at all," recalls Barbara DeGroot, LCA's current director of promotions. "He'd wake up at six in the morning and call me and say, 'Why can't we do Looney Tunes popcorn?' We were all full of a sense of really being on our own and running our own shows."

"We ask our kids. We ask our friends. We go to stores and flea markets," Romanelli says of his team's creative process. "Then it all comes down to whether something gets us excited."

The movie *Batman* was LCA's first big test, and it wasn't an easy one. As DeGroot recalls, "I couldn't sell *Batman* for anything. I'd show the slides, and it was always, 'too dark, too sinister.'" Spurned by traditional marketing channels, LCA embarked on a campaign to create a "trendy *Batman* mystique." They tightly controlled publicity, then began trickling high-end merchandise to a select group of clothing and department stores. *Batman* T-shirts were placed in several rock videos, which reinforced the impressions left by Warner's dramatic movie trailers.

"It became hip," Romanelli recalls, "and we fed that appetite with quality product. We went out to major retailers and said, 'Here's 50 things you can do with it, and here's a clip from the movie.' When I walked by my son's room one night and heard him saying, 'I can get you a *Batman* pin for \$5,' I realized we didn't have to sell *Batman* anymore." According to Romanelli, retail sales of *Batman* merchandise are estimated to reach \$500 million.

Warner is following a similar strategy



Play smart with a Looney Tunes chess set (\$500) from Saratoga Mint.

for its Looney Tunes campaign, beginning with a Bugs 50th-birthday celebration. This spring, movie audiences will see *Box Office Bunny*, the first new Bugs theatrical short in 26 years; this summer, a new Bugs prime-time special will air on CBS. At retail

"One of the things we found out in our research was that our consumer skews a little older. When you combine Looney Tunes with Brach's, you get a chemistry that's magic for all ages." ♥ RON HABIJANAC, president and CEO, Jacobs Suchard Inc., makers of Brach's candy

stores there will be Looney Tunes fashion shows; at video stores, Bugs buffs will find new collections of his vintage classics.

All of this, Romanelli says, will "create a great environment" for several new Looney Tunes products. Tyson Foods, for example, is launching Looney Tunes Meals, a new line of frozen foods aimed at the children's \$250 million microwave market. "In terms of entering the children's meal market, you need something fun," says Joni Rutherford, Tyson's product manager. "Plus, mom is familiar with Bugs, and she is the person we have to convince that it's nutritionally balanced."

Rutherford says the diversity of Looney Tunes characters, which appeal to various age groups, allows different meals to be skewed to different groups. Because studies show that Yosemite Sam skews toward a slightly older child, and that Tweety appeals to younger ones, Tyson stamped Sam's picture on its barbecue chicken and Tweety's on its macaroni-and-cheese dish.

Holiday Inn is licensing the Looney Tunes bunch for promotions aimed at the burgeoning family-travel industry. Among other things, the company is launching an animated live-action television commercial, and kids will get Bugs Bunny welcome kits when they check in with mom and dad. Brach's, the nation's third-largest candy company, is looking to broaden its appeal to kids with new Looney Tunes confections. Seika Corporation and Hi Tech Expressions have climbed aboard the Bugs bandwagon with an extensive line of video games and computer software featuring the Looney Tunes fraternity.

This year, you'll find Bugs at supermarkets and service stations: General Mills has licensed his smirking visage for its Cheerios



Brach's candy makers found that a canister of jelly beans (\$4) is sweeter when mixed with Looney Tunes.



Go camping with a Bugs sleeping bag and tent or relax with Bugs on a pool float (left, \$16) from Ero Industries.

Peter Brams Designs' 14K-gold bracelet features seven handcrafted charms (\$600).



boxes; Shell will be selling Looney Tunes figurines.

In Japan, where foreign companies often fail to penetrate complex distribution channels, Warner is going after retailers. LCA International vice president Jon Lang says that in much the same manner that, say, Bloomingdale's will have a California Style promotion, Japanese retailers will sponsor Bugs Days and create boutiques to sell a multitude of licensed products. Lang is attempting to avoid the well-known pitfalls of foreign advertising by hiring local graphic artists and copywriters to create the company's murals and posters. "What's up, Doc?" he says of the hare's internationally famous greeting, "is a phrase full of nuances."

In Europe, Lang is targeting manufacturers. He has engineered a deal with Ferrero, a \$4 billion confections conglomerate in Italy, to include Looney Tunes toys in its highly popular Kindersurprise line of chocolate eggs. One of Ferrero's product lines, Nutella, will feature Bugs and friends on in-store displays. And all of these efforts, says Lang, are being keyed to the introduction of the *Warner's TV Hour*, a compilation of cartoons and other family programming that will be syndicated overseas.

"This year we pulled in about \$50 million in

pretax revenues," reports Terry Semel. "By 1992, we expect to double that."

IT'S 3 P.M. NOW, and Romanelli is sitting in director Tim Burton's small, second-story office located on Warner's Hollywood lot. Burton is swigging Evian. Standing before them are two very-buttoned-down executives from Kenner Toys, one of whom has been demonstrating next year's line of *Beetlejuice* toys.

After an hour of demonstrations, Burton sits back and passes judgment: "Great! Great! I really love this stuff!" The Kenner execs are jubilant. Together, the men work out the subtle changes they will make so that children will respond most favorably to the products.

Romanelli takes the interaction between Hollywood creatives and LCA manufacturers seriously; he knows that the merchandising doesn't stop when a film's gone to video. "The real big lesson of *Beetlejuice* and *Batman* is that movie marketing and movie merchandising can exist hand in hand. Before, that was not the case," Romanelli says. "We deliberately made this a coordinated marketing effort. A film or TV release coordinated with the licensees means they end up synergizing each other."

Consider, for ex-

Bugs' Godfather

FOR THREE DECADES, Edward Bleier, now president of Warner Bros. Animation, has been responsible for Bugs Bunny's phenomenal success on network—and, lately, cable—television. Consider: ABC's *The Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show* ranks first among all Saturday-morning cartoon shows and has dominated its time slot for 28 years; Bugs and Daffy prime-time specials on CBS and NBC boosted their traditional time-slot shares by 15 points since starting 14 years ago; and Looney Tunes are now the undisputed champs of the all-children's Nickelodeon cable network, while Bugs and *Wild World of Shorts* top rival TNT's lineup.

"We have literally had all three networks in constant auction for 20 years," says Bleier, who is also in charge of pay-TV and network features for Warner. "No other program is broadcast more often, or has lasted longer, on more networks and stations. No other star has so consistently dominated the ratings."

Bleier was a young programming executive at ABC when Bugs first became available for TV in 1960. "At that time, Bugs was not the great American icon he is today," Bleier says. "However, he was known for his outstanding theatrical success." But ABC knew a hit when it saw one, and gave the wisecracking hare his own prime-time half-hour. "Bugs had all the elements of successful programming—humor, action, suspense, empathy, sympathetic characters, terrific stories—and, joy to the accountants, the shows were already produced, so the package was not expensive."

In 1962, while he headed ABC's children's programming, Bleier proceeded to build the network's Saturday-morning schedule around Bugs; it quickly became a key profit center. Says Bleier: "The competition among advertisers resembled the cartoons themselves."

Of course, in TV land a hit is a hit is a hit—until someone yawns once. How did Bleier, who jumped ship to Warner Bros. in 1969, keep the attention of his successor network programming executives, a group known to become easily bored? According to Bleier, the secret was in mixing and remixing Warner's basic stable of 800 Looney Tunes cartoons into various "packages," with different starring and supporting characters.

Over the past three decades, the characters have appeared in such varying formats as *The Bugs Bunny Show*, *The Porky Pig Show*, *The Road Runner Show*, *The Sylvester & Tweety Show* and *Bugs Bunny & Road Runner*. "We found that the only thing you could do wrong was to underbroadcast them," says Bleier. Like an efficient meat-packing company, he jokes, "We use every part of the hog but the squeal." Just don't let Porky hear you say that, Ed.



Edward Bleier



Be king for a day
in a J.G. Hook
T-shirt (\$26).

ample, Romanelli's recharging of Warner's catalog division. To build customer awareness, LCA planted a short advertisement for the Warner catalog on the introduction to 300,000 *Beetlejuice* videos. In it, Bugs nags viewers to call an 800 number to receive a free catalog. Romanelli was expecting 20,000 calls; Warner received 300,000 over a three-month period, more than 5 percent of whom actually placed orders. Sales of catalog merchandise—Looney Tunes ball caps and T-shirts and toys—have since hip-hopped from \$200,000 three years ago to \$5 million last year. The lesson? "We found that Bugs was a terrific salesman," he says.

LCA will have even more "salespeople" to play with this September, when Warner releases *Tiny Toon Adventures*, a new generation of cartoon characters that will be televised nationally in the popular afternoon time slot (see related story). Romanelli has plans in the works to hook Tiny Toon characters to a major McDonald's promotion. Playskool, a division of Hasbro, has signed on as Tiny Toons' toy manufacturer. Dobie Originals Inc. will do an exclusive line of apparel that will showcase the show's new idioms ("Toonsters" or "Toonetics," for example, which refer to the show's fans).

Tiny Toons, with its familiar Bugsian sense of humor and irony may become one of Warner's biggest hits ever. "*Tiny Toons* will be in a luxury class of its own, appealing to all ages," says Romanelli. "We see it as the marketing of a new generation of classic characters, so we've restricted the number of licensee categories. Instead of 100, we'll do 25 to 50. We can pay more attention to quality that way, and make sure that the consumer will find the products as entertaining as the show."

AT 4:15, ROMANELLI drives back to his offices in Burbank. He evaluates his meeting with Burton as "a great success." But there's still plenty of work to be done. With LCA revved up to maximum speed, there are just so many things to stay on top of these days, from the four multiplex-cinema stores Warner is building around the world to the theme park scheduled to open in Australia next spring.

"1989 was the year of *Batman*. 1990 is the year of *Tiny Toon Adventures*," says Romanelli with a contented grin. "But every year is the year of Bugs." ▼

Greg Critser is a senior editor of California magazine.



Tyson Foods introduces eight new Looney Tunes meals, including Bugs Bunny Chicken Chunks dinner.

Bugs will steer you in the right direction with a Rand International bicycle (\$50).

Cause a racket on any tennis court with Carousel's racquet cover (\$17), as served by Bugs.







**WHEN WE SET OUT TO
MAKE A
NUTRITIOUS MEAL
KIDS WOULD
ACTUALLY LIKE,
WE GOT SOME FUNNY
LOOKS.**

It's true. These are microwaveable meals both you and your kids will like.

They go easy on fats, and have no artificial colors or flavors. Just delicious, wholesome food kids can't resist.

And, only new Tyson® Looney Tunes™ Meals have the fun of Bugs Bunny™ and friends.

Look for them in your grocer's freezer.



LOONEY TUNES™
▷ MEALS ◁



MEET THE

Tiny Toons

TINY TOON ADVENTURES stars Buster Bunny and Babs Bunny, and introduces a lively young cast of Warner Bros. characters (who occasionally interact with their "adult" Looney Tunes counterparts). The cartoon series premieres in September with a CBS prime-time special, followed by 65 half-hour episodes that will air weekday afternoons on local stations. Additionally, Warner plans to release an original 80-minute *Tiny Toon Adventures* home video. **Jerry Lazar** interviewed executive producer Steven Spielberg at his Amblin Entertainment office.

Q: Whose idea was *Tiny Toon Adventures*?

SPIELBERG: *Tiny Toons* was presented to me by Terry Semel, the president of Warner Bros. Knowing about my passion for animation and specifically for the irascibility of the Warner Bros. classic toons, he invited me to become involved in the creation of a gallery of new characters.

Q: How do these junior toonsters relate to Bugs and his gang?

SPIELBERG: This is the new generation. I always thought that Bugs was wise enough to be in his mid-20s on a human scale. Elmer Fudd was, of course, a real stick-in-the-mud adult. And even though Tweety was a little baby bird, he looked like he was 3 going on 33. With *Tiny Toons*, we've created young characters and made them every bit

*They may look like
juvenile versions
of the Looney
Tunes characters.
But they're not
for kids only.
An exclusive
interview with
executive producer
STEVEN SPIELBERG*

as irreverent as the classics. The *Tiny Toons* capture some of the flavor of their forebears, and yet they're completely original; they've got their own personalities. And they're extremely contemporary. Like most kids today, they're adolescents trapped in an adult world. The only escape is their wits, their senses of humor and notes from their parents.

Q: They live in Acme Acres. Describe that.

SPIELBERG: If you were suspended in midair and violated the law of toon physics by looking down, you'd plummet to the ground. Before you made a body imprint in the earth, you'd see the whole lay of the land: suburbia to your right, Acme Looniversity to the left, and right down the center, the forest where Babs and Buster make their home. Acme Acres is a cartoon microcosm of our own world, and of course everything is called "Acme."

Q: You could market an Acme Acres map.

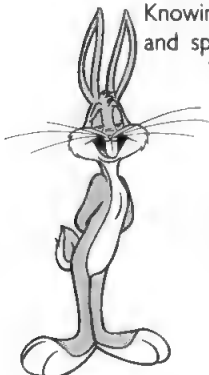
SPIELBERG: Yeah, maps to the Toons homes.

Q: The characters leave Acme Acres, though.

SPIELBERG: They travel everywhere, from the pyramids of Egypt to the rain forests of the Amazon. They do more globe-trotting than Indiana Jones ever imagined.

Q: Bugs and the classic Looney Tunes characters make cameo appearances.

SPIELBERG: Most of them teach at Acme Looniversity. They teach Toon Logic. The Tasmanian Devil teaches Dizzy Devil that bunnies are yummy, and Bugs teaches Wild Takes class, where the toons



Eh, I taught da kids all dey know.



'This Is the New Generation'



ELMYRA

She's a toon bear trap—her deep love for animals verges on the obsessive and she can nab any pet, no matter the size, and just love them to extinction. She leaves a trail of destruction. She's like Shirley Temple gone amok.



HAMTON

His favorite activities include eating, cleaning, cooking and worrying. He's very shy and has a low-self-esteem problem—the other toons are always picking on him. His motto is, "Cleanliness is next to hogliness."



PLUCKY DUCK

He has an ego the size of Trump Tower and has a craving to win an Academy Award or be the next Tom Cruise. He wants to be the center of attention. He's lovable despite the fact that he's selfish, greedy, quick-tempered and egotistical.



MONTANA MAX

Monty is sort of a 14-year-old Freddie Bartholomew—the richest kid in the world, the nasty little brat that you just love to deplore. But he always gets his comeuppance.



DIZZY DEVIL

He's our party animal—a destructive goofball who talks in gibberish and eats anything. His favorite food is pizza rolls, but he also enjoys eating an occasional classmate from Acme Looniversity.



BABS BUNNY

She'll do anything for a laugh—she's a bit of a stand-up comedienne and also a tomboy. She does schtick and impressions, and loves to make people believe she's Madonna, Cher or Lady Di.

Buster Bunny and Babs Bunny, who cohost the show, are like brother and sister. They're always competing for the spotlight and trying to outdo each other.



BUSTER BUNNY

He's not the son of Bugs; he's a distant relative. He's smart and fun-loving but also mischievous. His favorite class is Wisecracks 101, and to earn cash he has a part-time job mowing lawns with his teeth.

"LOOK DOC, I'M A HARE-LOOM!"

Created especially in honor of Bugs Bunny's 50th Birthday, this limited edition porcelain collectible is a wonderful gift for all fans of that wascally wabbit.

"EH... I T'UGHT BISQUE WAS A SOUP."

The world renowned ceramic artists of The Andrea Collection by Sadek have captured the irreverent wit of Bugs Bunny in this 10 3/4" high sculpture. Each figure is crafted of the finest bisque porcelain, then hand-painted. And each is individually numbered to ensure its value.

"HARE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW."

This commemorative Bugs Bunny sculpture is available only through Warner Bros. It will not be sold in any retail outlet. So when this limited edition of only 5,000 is sold out, at the special collector's price of \$150, they'll be gone forever.

"OIDER YOIRS TODAY, DOC!"

Just call 1-800-223-6524, and have your VISA or MasterCard handy. Or send check or VISA/MC information to: The Warner Bros. Collection, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91522.

CALL NOW: 1-800-223-6524

24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK

Please add \$12.95 each for insurance, special handling and rush delivery. In California, add 6.75% sales tax. Sorry, no C.O.D.s. USA orders only.

THE WARNER BROS. COLLECTION

4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91522

Please send me _____ limited edition Bugs Bunny sculptures, specially commissioned by Warner Bros. in commemoration of Bugs Bunny's 50th Birthday.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

☐ Please charge my ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

ACCOUNT NUMBER _____

EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

☐ Enclosed is my check for \$162.95 (\$150 + \$12.95 shipping). In CA, add 6.75% sales tax.



ABP590

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learn comic facial reactions like head bobs and eye pops. They're spreading the gospel, according to (Looney Tunes directors) Chuck Jones, Friz Freleng, Tex Avery and the whole gang of forefathers who were the geniuses of the Warner Bros. cartoon division.

Q: Can you maintain the quality of those classics?

SPIELBERG: In my opinion, the animation on *Tiny Toons* is better than any of the Saturday-morning or weekday series in quality, depth and fluid movement. We're using a color range much more extensive than anything seen before on a TV screen—much more along the lines of a feature film. The in-between work is more detailed—the characters don't freeze-speak, like in the old *Clutch Cargo*, where they'd take token footsteps on a loop and freeze and speak again. There's much more body language in *Tiny Toons*; the characters are almost defined by how they scurry and vibrate when they come to a stop.

Q: Who is your intended audience?

SPIELBERG: We're shooting for a younger audience, but we're also hoping to get the adults to watch with the kids. I've always been in favor of not appealing to just one segment of the family. There's something for everybody. We're working adult sophistication into this, because that was the original feel of Warner Bros. cartoons for me. As a kid, I remember my dad and I would go see the Disney cartoons, which were wonderful. But we only really fell out of our chairs when we were watching Bugs and Elmer Fudd, or Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner. You could hear the audience laughing hysterically, and my father and I laughed shoulder to shoulder. We would die laughing. Disney made you feel good, but Warner toons cracked you up.

*The Tiny Toons
travel everywhere,
from the
pyramids of
Egypt to the
ruin forests of
the Amazon. They
do more globe-
trotting than
Indiana Jones
ever imagined.*

Q: Tell us about some of the adventures we'll be seeing.

SPIELBERG: Some of our episodes are multiple variations on a common theme, like dating, sci-fi films, sports or the environment. Our half-hour adventures have the toons going to Hollywood to become movie stars, to the center of the earth or to a trendy restaurant.

Q: We've noticed that, unlike Elmer Fudd, the human characters don't carry rifles.

SPIELBERG: I wanted to avoid all firearms. My whole feeling was: leave rabbit hunting to the classics. The only weapons you'll see are so fanciful you don't take them seriously.

Q: What is your role as executive producer?

SPIELBERG: I sat with everybody at the initial concept meetings. I worked on formatting the show with the Warner Bros. team, and I've thought up a number of episodes. I see storyboards on many of the shows, and I'm there to say whether a

show is appropriate for this time period, whether it's too intense for kids, whether it's consistent with the characters. But I pretty much let the animators animate, the writers write and the directors direct.

Q: How much time do you devote to Tiny Toons?

SPIELBERG: Animation is the most fun I have right now. I'm involved with other projects, but in the last couple of years, I've had more fun overseeing the animation from *The Land Before Time*, *An American Tail* and the sequel to *An American Tail*, which is before the cameras in London right now. As the dollar shrinks and movies cost more, my imagination is becoming less and less affordable. So I've turned to animation as a way to free it up. In animation, anything can happen. ▼



*"C'mon, Steven!
Back to work!"*



 A Time Warner Company

Get in gear for the party of the year!
Look for Bugs Bunny's 50th Birthday Collectibles
in fine stores everywhere!



TM & © 1990 Warner Bros., Inc.

What's Up, DANA?

WE'RE NOT SURE how the ever fashionable Bugs Bunny would greet you on *China Beach*. But here's how the international star's famous salutation translates elsewhere:

French:

Quoi de neuf, docteur?

("What's new, doctor?")

German:

Is was, doc?

("What is, doc?")

Italian:

Che succede, amico?

("What happens, friend?")

Japanese:

Do shi ta no da ro?

("What's happening?")

Portuguese:

O que há velhino?

("How are you, old timer?")

Spanish:

¿Que hay de nuevo, viejo?

("What's new, old man?")

Swedish:

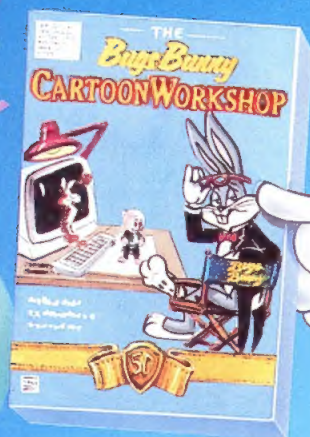
Vad står på?

("What's going on?")

Dana Delaney, Emmy Award-winning star of ABC's *China Beach*, sports a leather-and-wool Bugs 50th-birthday jacket by Too Cute, available in Warner Bros. catalog, (800) 223-6524.

HAPPY 50th BIRTHDAY

You Wascally Wabbit!



Celebrate with
these great
new Nintendo®
and computer
software
releases.



KEMCO • SEIKA

Licensed by Nintendo for play on the
Nintendo Entertainment System®

This Wabbit And His Fwends Are Weady For A New Genewation.



This fall Warner Bros. brings to television one of the most cherished cartoon series ever, *Merrie Melodies Starring Bugs Bunny™ And Friends™*!

These loveable Looney Tunes™ characters that you grew up with are back five-days-a-week in a brand new collection of classic adventures. Bugs Bunny,™ Daffy Duck™ and

all your favorites will be on hand every weekday to bring their own special brand of hilarity to a new generation of fans.

With 50 years of experience in entertaining the world, *Merrie Melodies Starring Bugs Bunny™ And Friends™* is destined to be everyone's hare raising favorite!



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